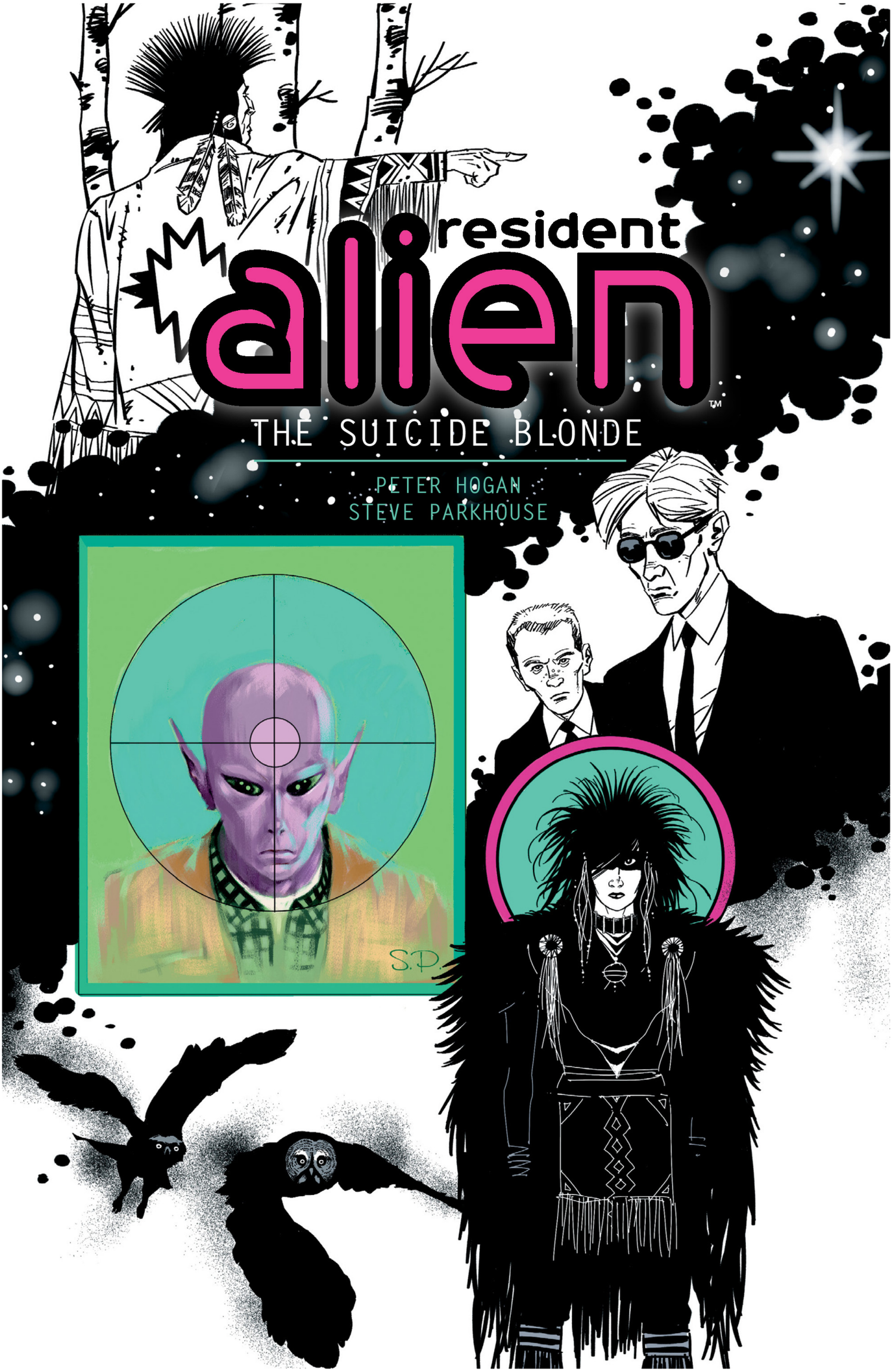
resident
alien
THE SUICIDE BLONDE
PETER HOGAN
STEVE PARKHOUSE
S.P.

RESIDENT ALIEN

THE SUICIDE BLONDE

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resident alien™

THE SUICIDE BLONDE

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RESIDENT ALIEN VOLUME 2: THE SUICIDE BLONDE
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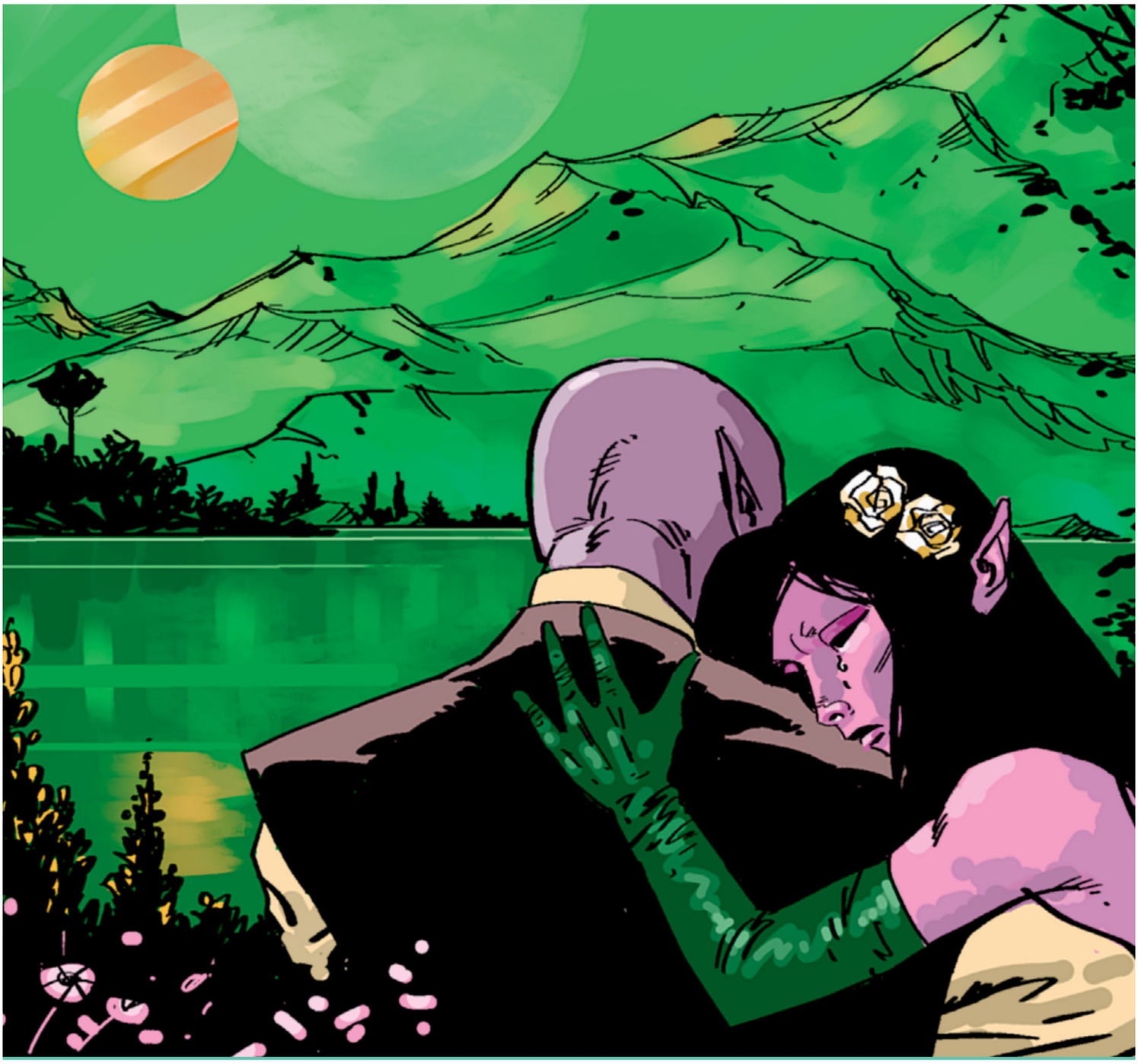


INTRODUCTION

BY PETER HOGAN

If I had to point to one thing that makes people like this comic, I'd say it's the fact that it's about people—even if one of them does happen to come from another planet. Flawed people, lonely people, caring people...people of every kind. It's about how friendship can save your life, and how the lack of it just might kill you; about fear and courage and secrets; about how love can break your heart, or give you enough hope to keep on keeping on.

So come along with Harry, as he deals with the darker side of life. He does it because he's fascinated by humanity, this strange alien race he's discovered, which holds so much promise and so many surprises. Even when things get dark—and this time around Harry's dealing with suicide...or is it really murder?

Either way, let's face it, that's about as dark as it gets. Better bring a flashlight along.

—PETER HOGAN
COMMUTING TO EARTH, 2014

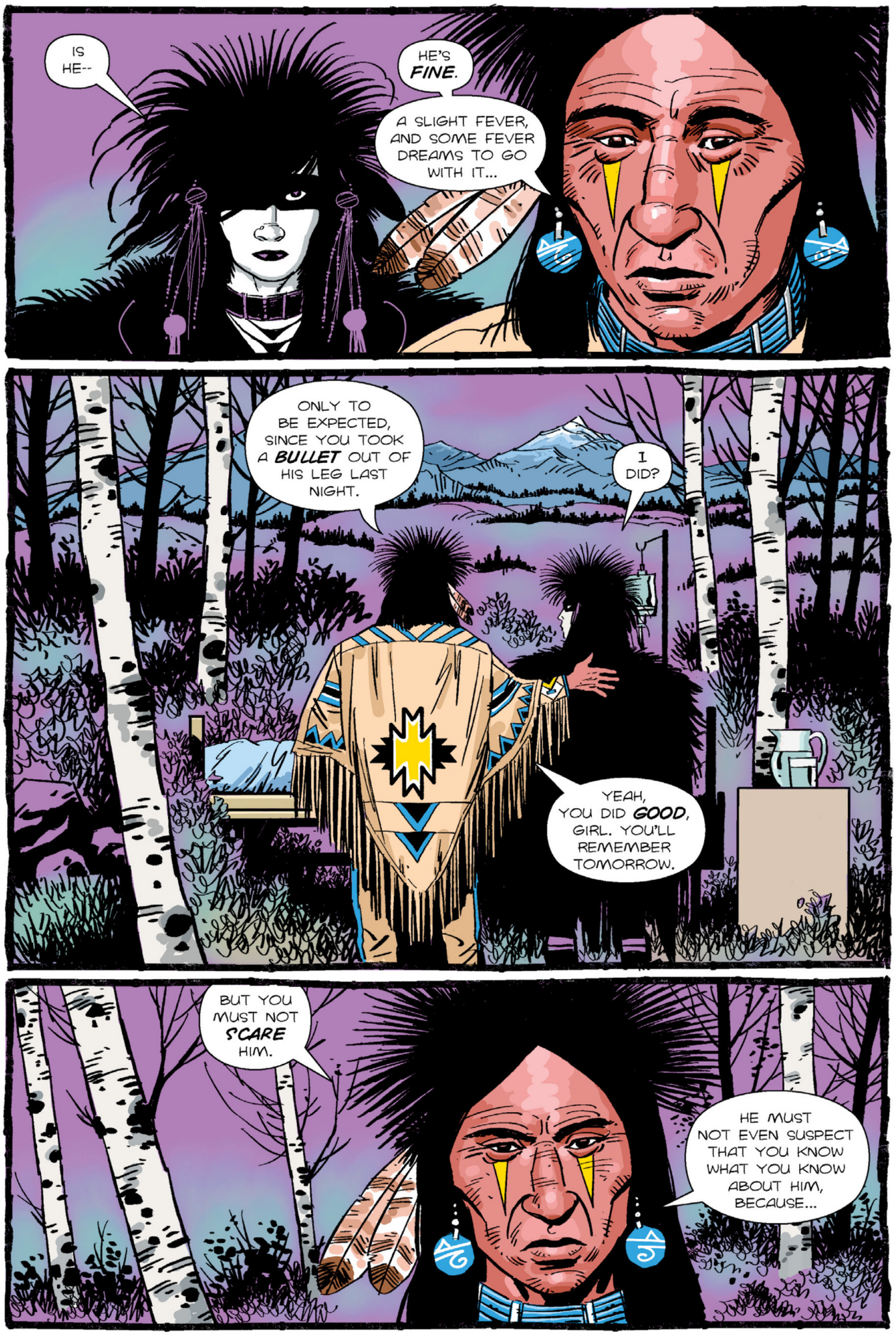
THE STORY SO FAR...

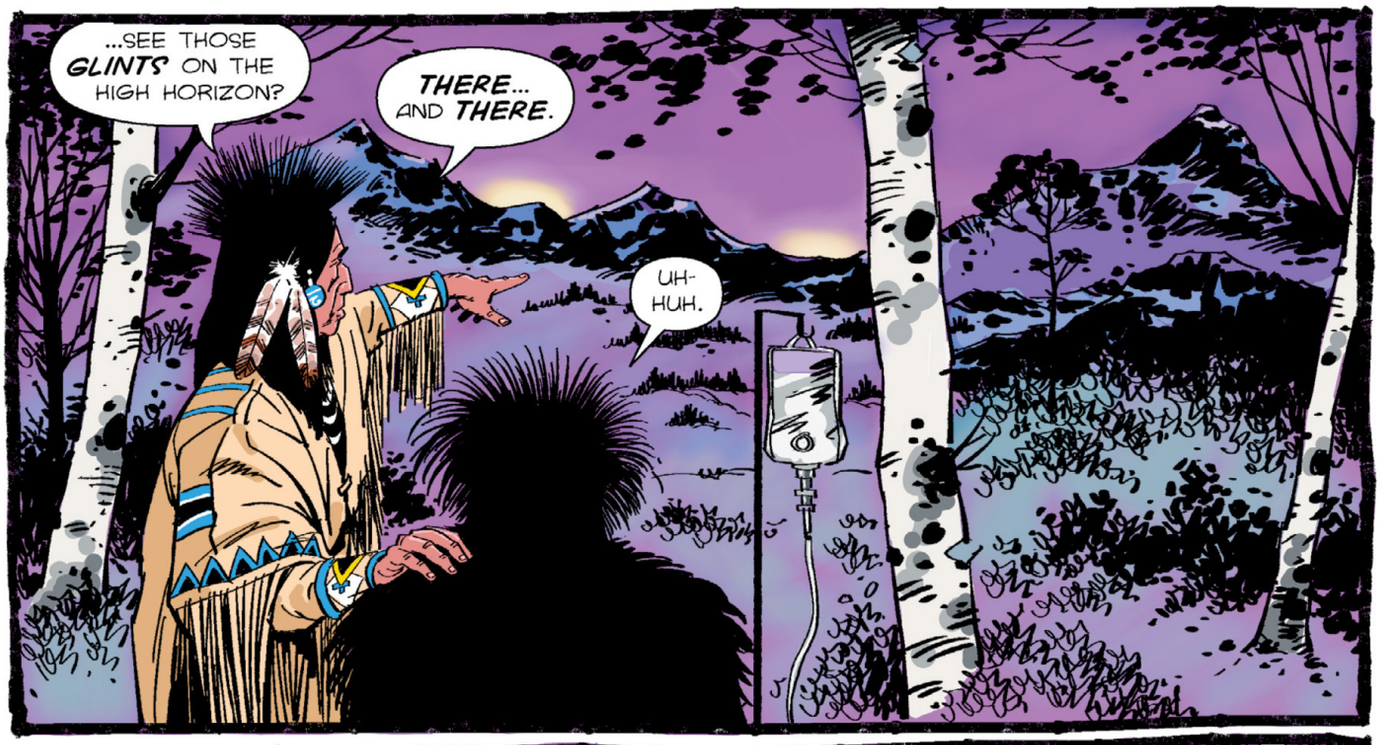
In a town called Patience, somewhere in the Pacific Northwest, lives a doctor named Harry Vanderspeigle. What nobody in the town realizes is that Harry's actually an alien visitor to our planet, who was shipwrecked here a few years ago. Since then, he's been hoping for a rescue that may or may not ever come, and while waiting he attempts to keep himself sane by playing amateur detective...

DAD? WHAT IS THIS?
WE'RE DREAMING, RIGHT?
YOU GOT A REAL KNACK FOR STATING THE OBVIOUS, PRINCESS.
SO... WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
WE'RE CHECKING UP ON YOUR DOCTOR PAL.

AND HERE HE IS NOW...

...DREAMING OF *HIS* WORLD, JUDGING BY THESE FLOWERS.
PRETTY.

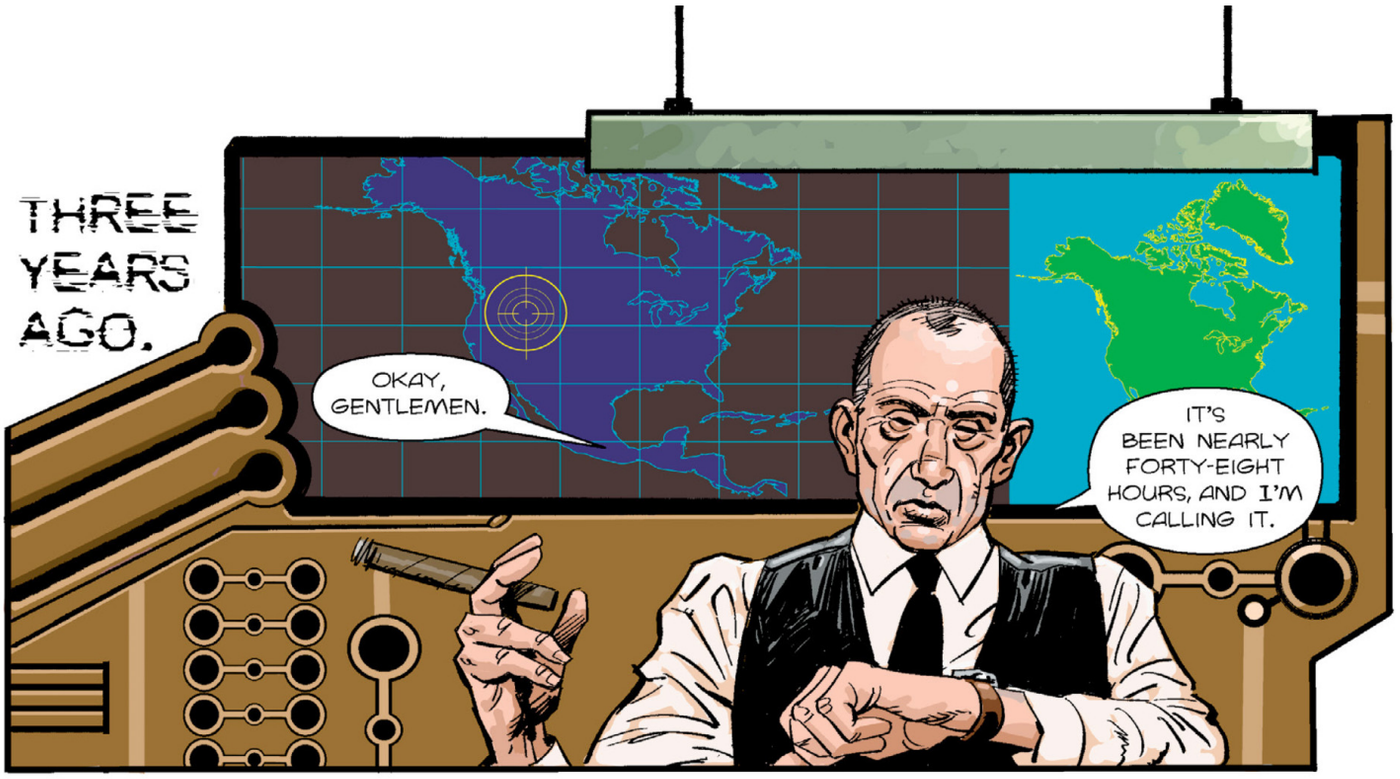

IS HE--
HE'S FINE.
A SLIGHT FEVER, AND SOME FEVER DREAMS TO GO WITH IT...
ONLY TO BE EXPECTED, SINCE YOU TOOK A BULLET OUT OF HIS LEG LAST NIGHT.
I DID?
YEAH, YOU DID GOOD, GIRL. YOU'LL REMEMBER TOMORROW.
BUT YOU MUST NOT SCARE HIM.
HE MUST NOT EVEN SUSPECT THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM, BECAUSE...

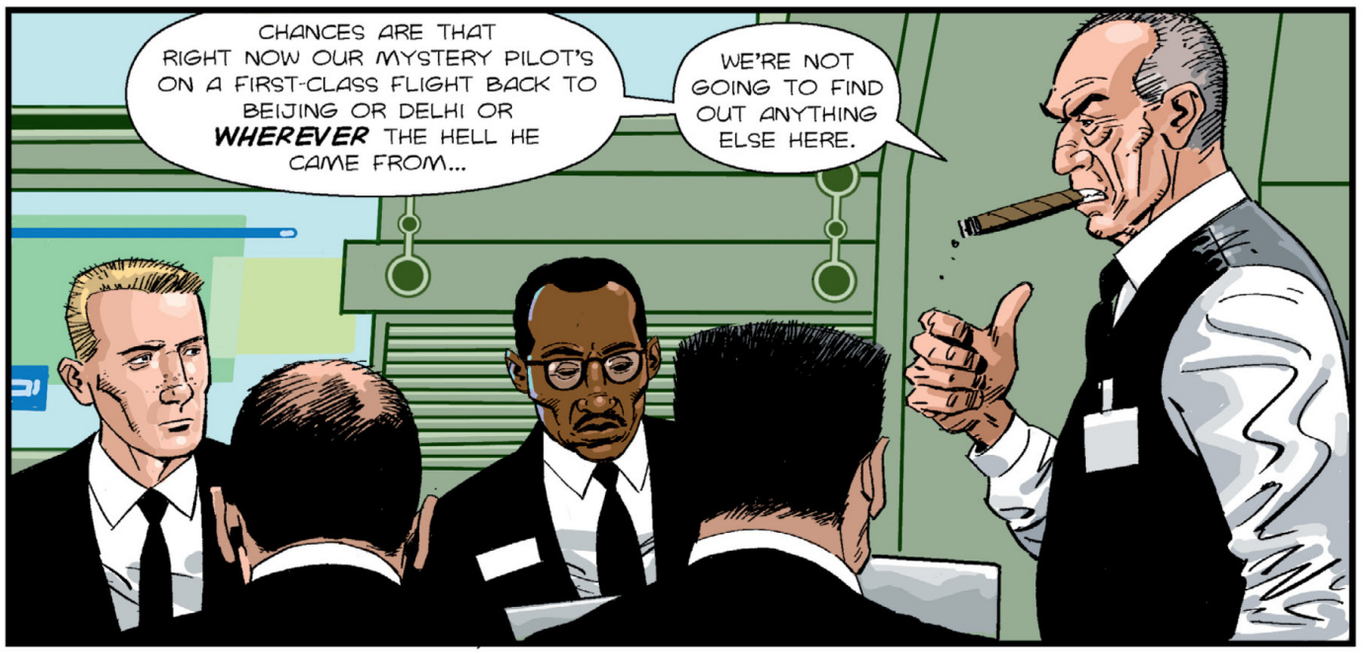

...SEE THOSE GLINTS ON THE HIGH HORIZON?
THERE... AND THERE.
UH-HUH.

SOMEONE WAITS, SOMEONE WATCHES.
THEY CANNOT SEE HIM YET, BUT...

...IF HE SHOULD TRY TO RUN...
...THEY WILL FOLLOW.

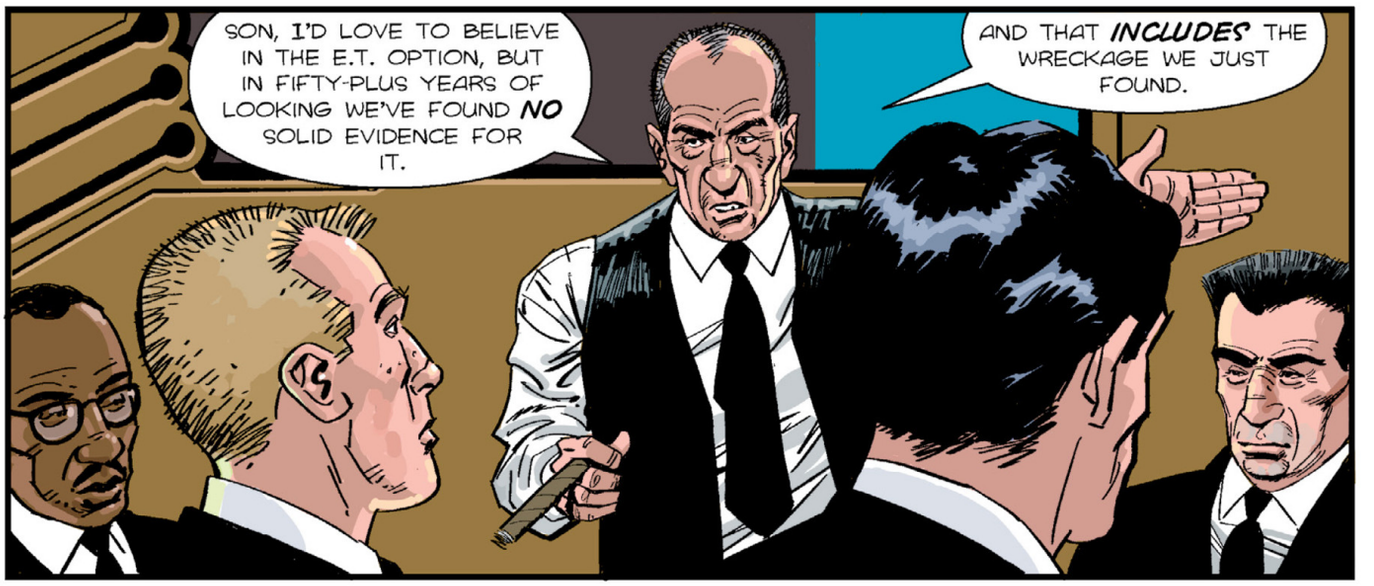
SO...
YOU MUST PERSUADE HIM TO STAY IN PATIENCE.

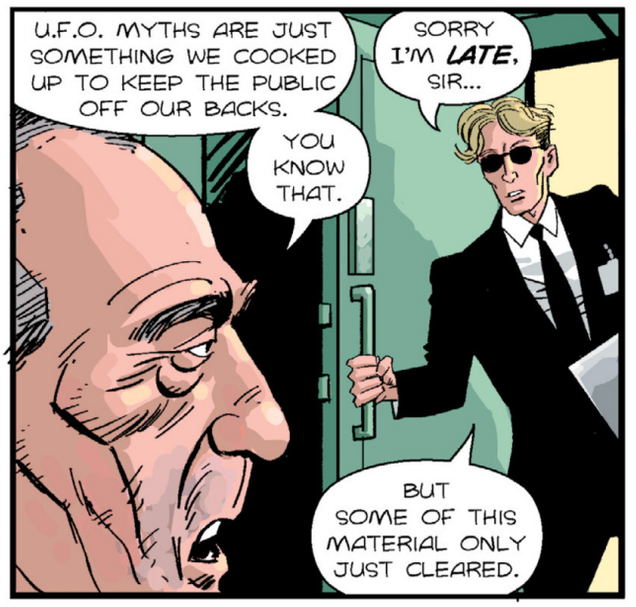

THREE YEARS AGO.
OKAY, GENTLEMEN.
IT'S BEEN NEARLY FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, AND I'M CALLING IT.

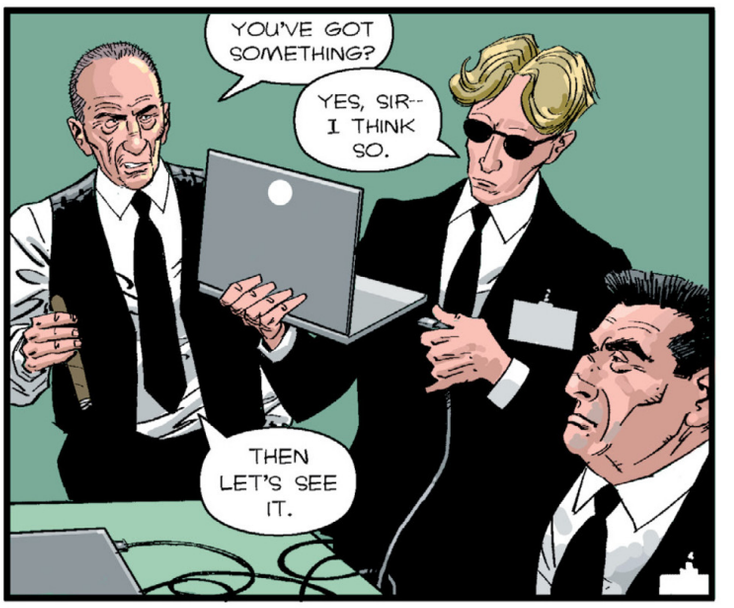

CHANCES ARE THAT RIGHT NOW OUR MYSTERY PILOT'S ON A FIRST-CLASS FLIGHT BACK TO BEIJING OR DELHI OR WHEREVER THE HELL HE CAME FROM...
WE'RE NOT GOING TO FIND OUT ANYTHING ELSE HERE.

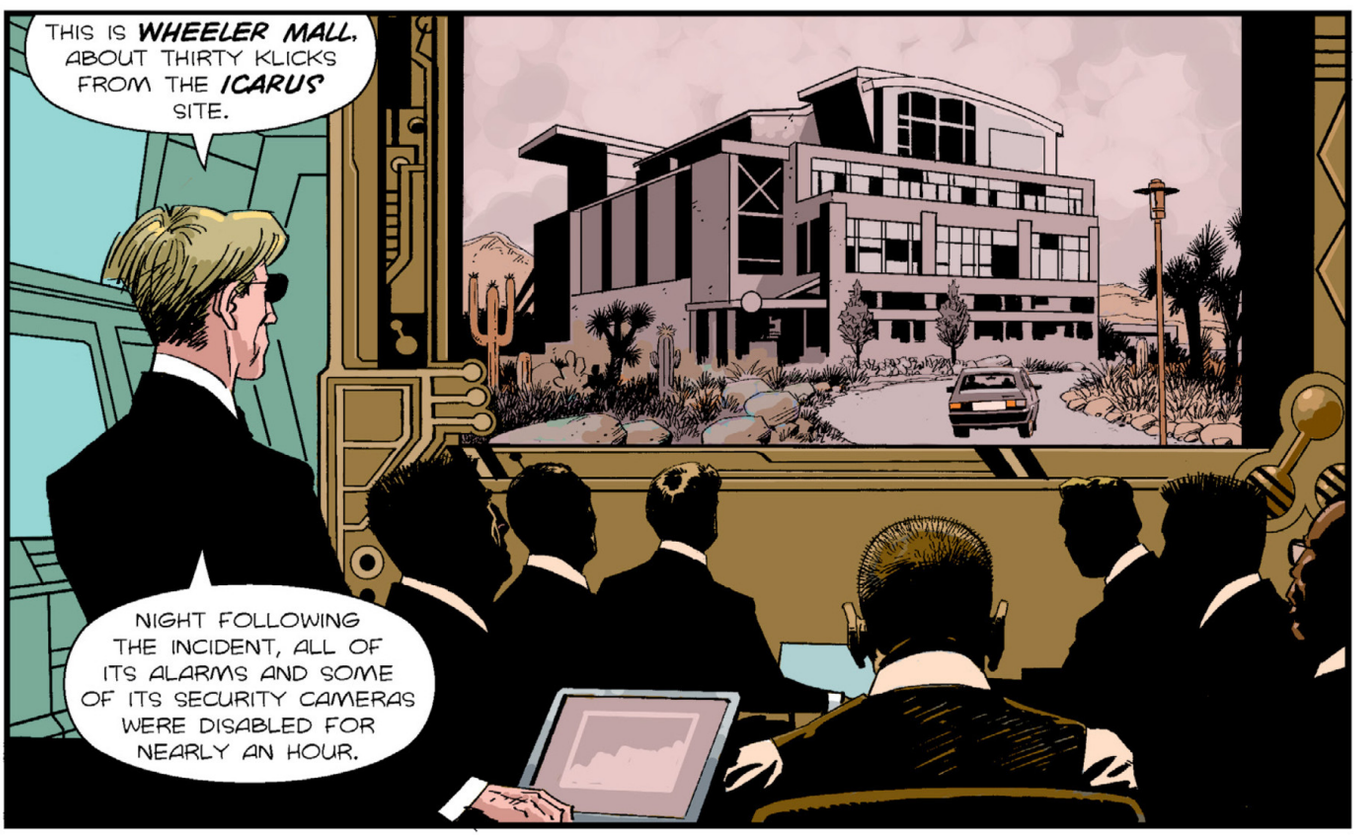
SIR? I'M A LITTLE CONFUSED...
HOW SO, MR. BROWN?

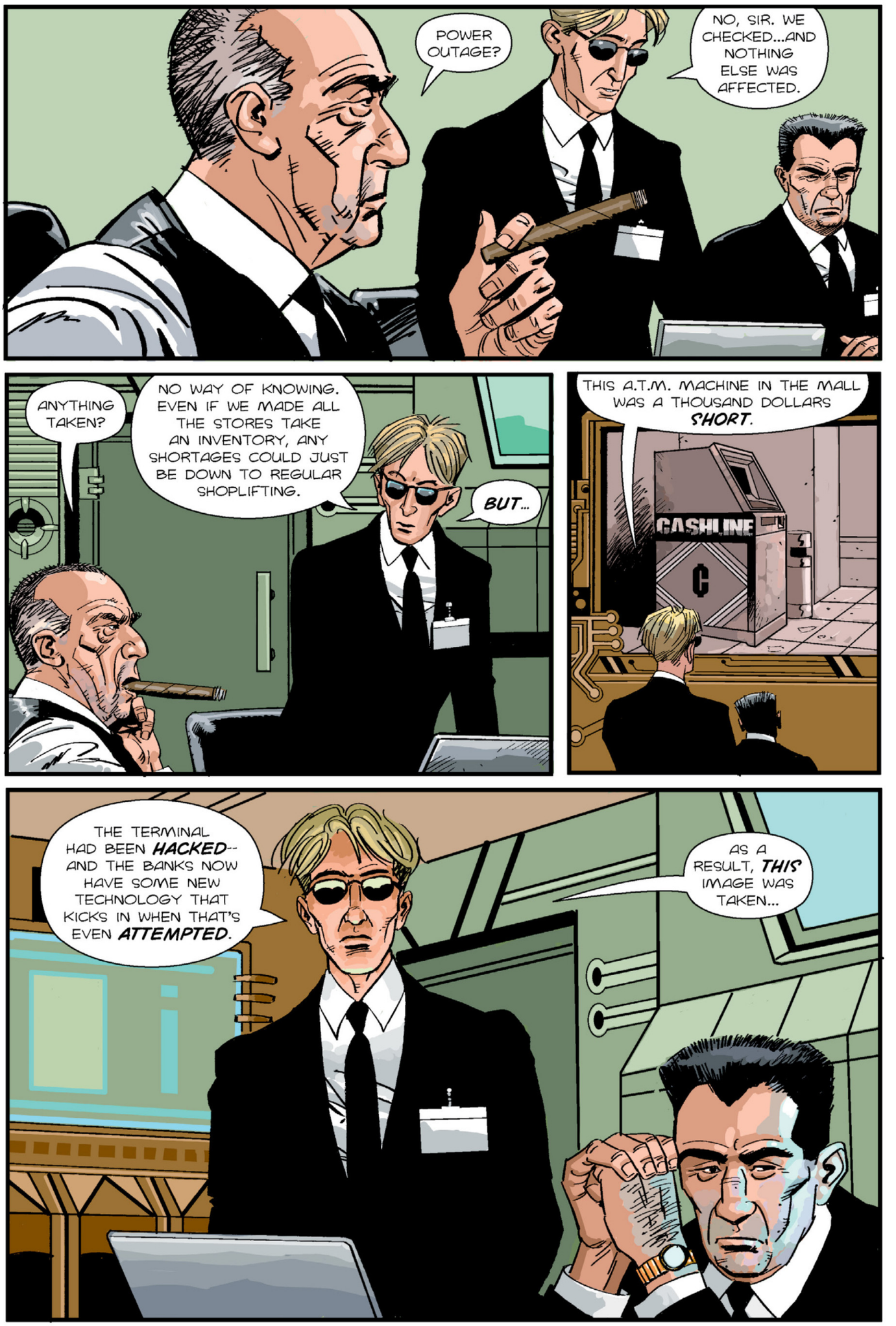
SIR, WE SAW WHAT THAT SHIP COULD DO.
ARE WE REALLY NOT EVEN GOING TO CONSIDER THE E.T. HYPOTHESIS?

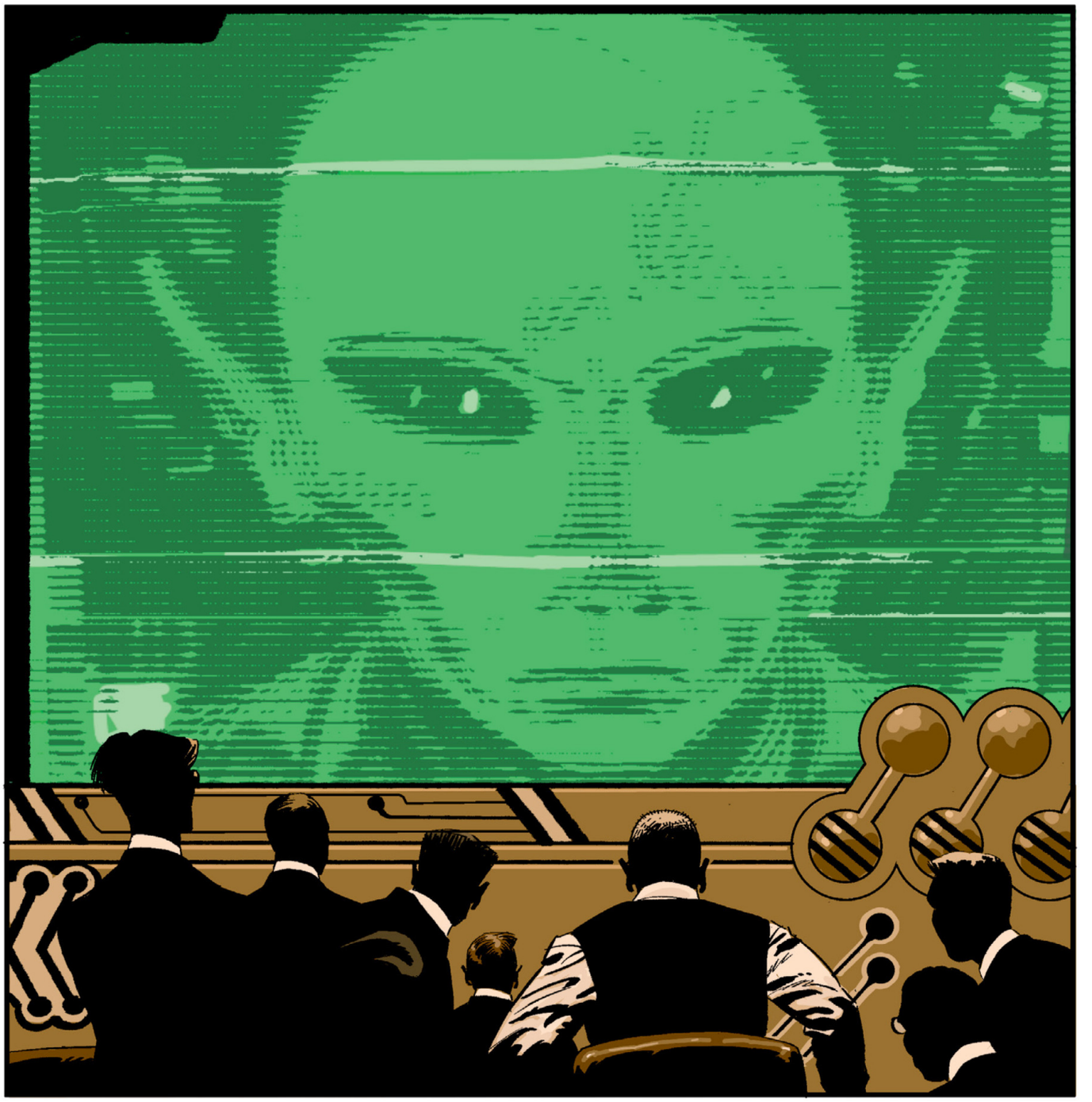

SON, I'D LOVE TO BELIEVE IN THE E.T. OPTION, BUT IN FIFTY-PLUS YEARS OF LOOKING WE'VE FOUND NO SOLID EVIDENCE FOR IT.
AND THAT INCLUDES THE WRECKAGE WE JUST FOUND.


U.F.O. MYTHS ARE JUST SOMETHING WE COOKED UP TO KEEP THE PUBLIC OFF OUR BACKS.
YOU KNOW THAT.
SORRY I'M LATE, SIR...
BUT SOME OF THIS MATERIAL ONLY JUST CLEARED.


YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING?
YES, SIR-- I THINK SO.
THEN LET'S SEE IT.


THIS IS WHEELER MALL, ABOUT THIRTY KLICKS FROM THE ICARUS SITE.
NIGHT FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT, ALL OF ITS ALARMS AND SOME OF ITS SECURITY CAMERAS WERE DISABLED FOR NEARLY AN HOUR.

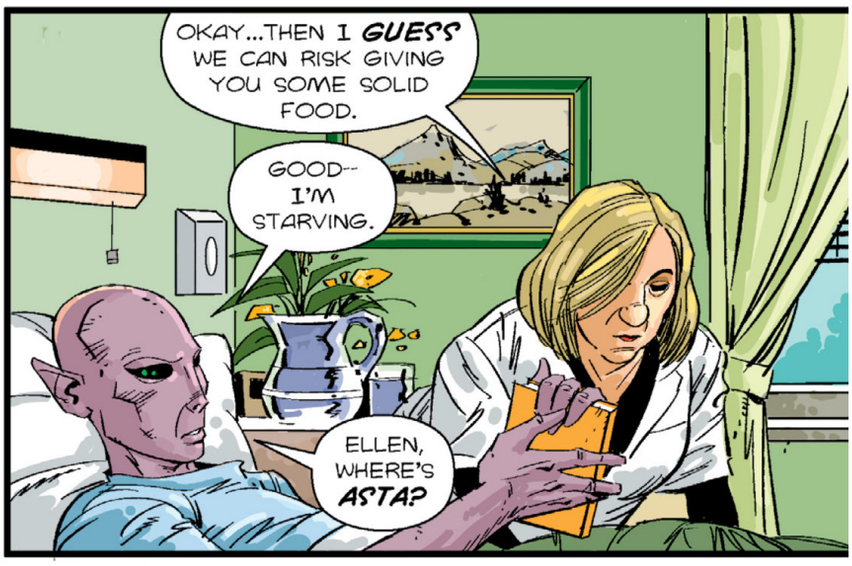

POWER OUTAGE?
NO, SIR. WE CHECKED...AND NOTHING ELSE WAS AFFECTED.
ANYTHING TAKEN?
NO WAY OF KNOWING. EVEN IF WE MADE ALL THE STORES TAKE AN INVENTORY, ANY SHORTAGES COULD JUST BE DOWN TO REGULAR SHOPLIFTING.
BUT...
THIS A.T.M. MACHINE IN THE MALL WAS A THOUSAND DOLLARS SHORT.
CASHLINE
THE TERMINAL HAD BEEN HACKED-- AND THE BANKS NOW HAVE SOME NEW TECHNOLOGY THAT KICKS IN WHEN THAT'S EVEN ATTEMPTED.
AS A RESULT, THIS IMAGE WAS TAKEN...

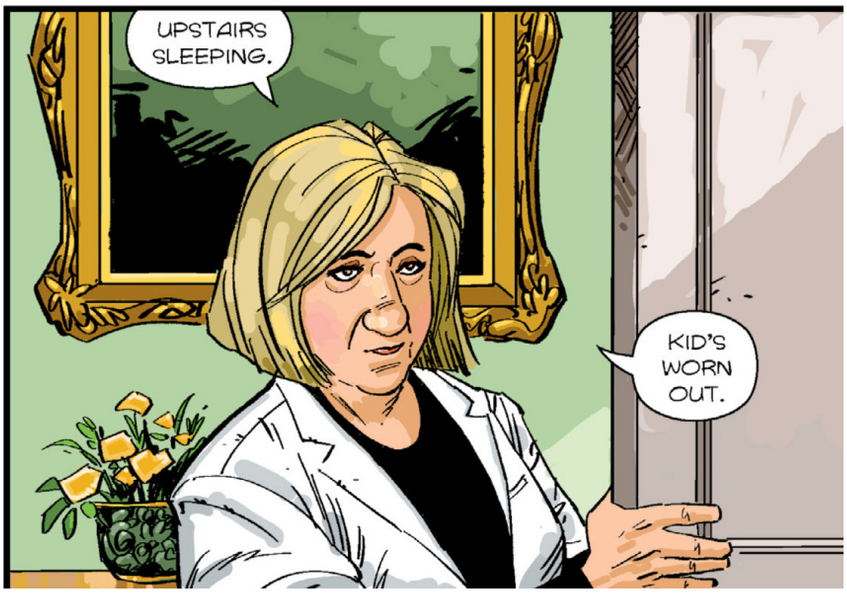


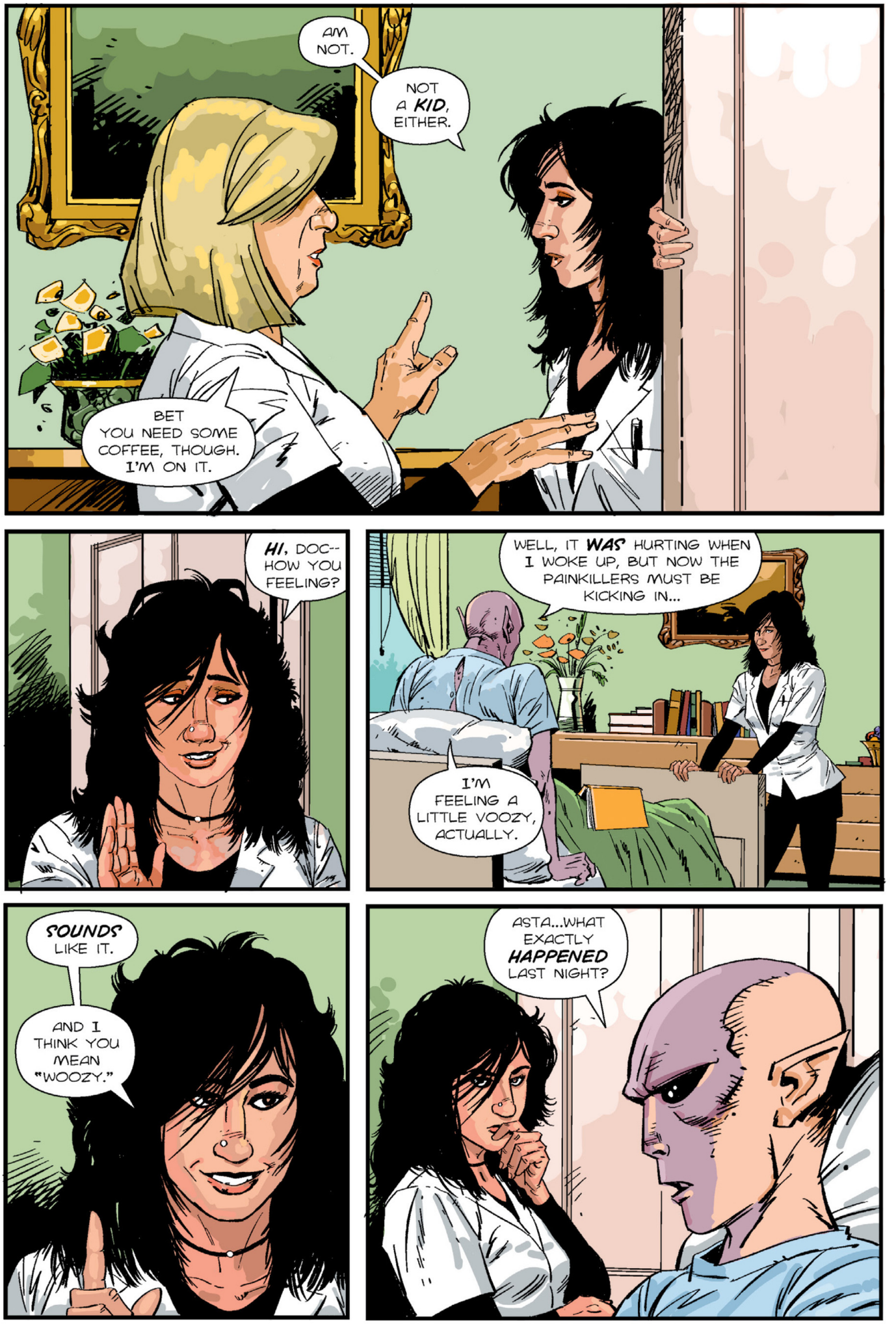
OH...KAY, GENTLEMEN...
MAYBE WE SHOULD CONSIDER THAT E.T. HYPOTHESIS AFTER ALL.

WELL, YOUR TEMPERATURE'S NORMAL...
A DEGREE OR TWO LOW, IN FACT.

ACTUALLY THAT'S, UM, NORMAL FOR ME...


OKAY...THEN I GUESS WE CAN RISK GIVING YOU SOME SOLID FOOD.
GOOD-- I'M STARVING.
ELLEN, WHERE'S ASTA?

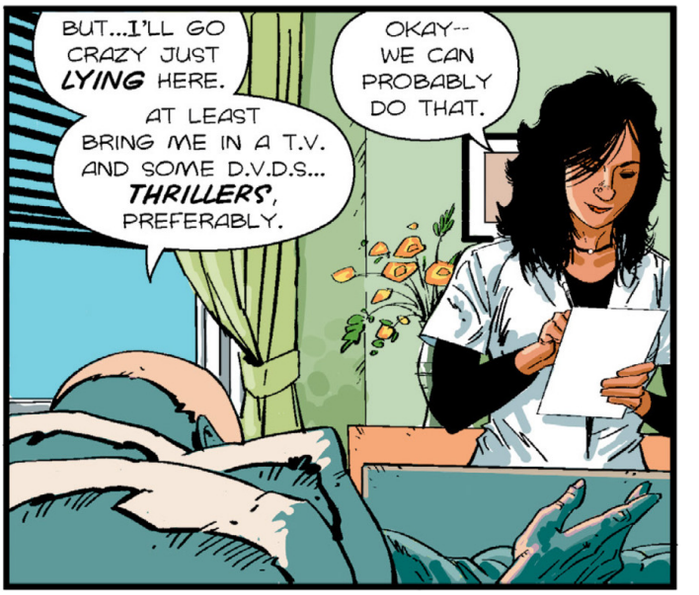

UPSTAIRS SLEEPING.
KID'S WORN OUT.

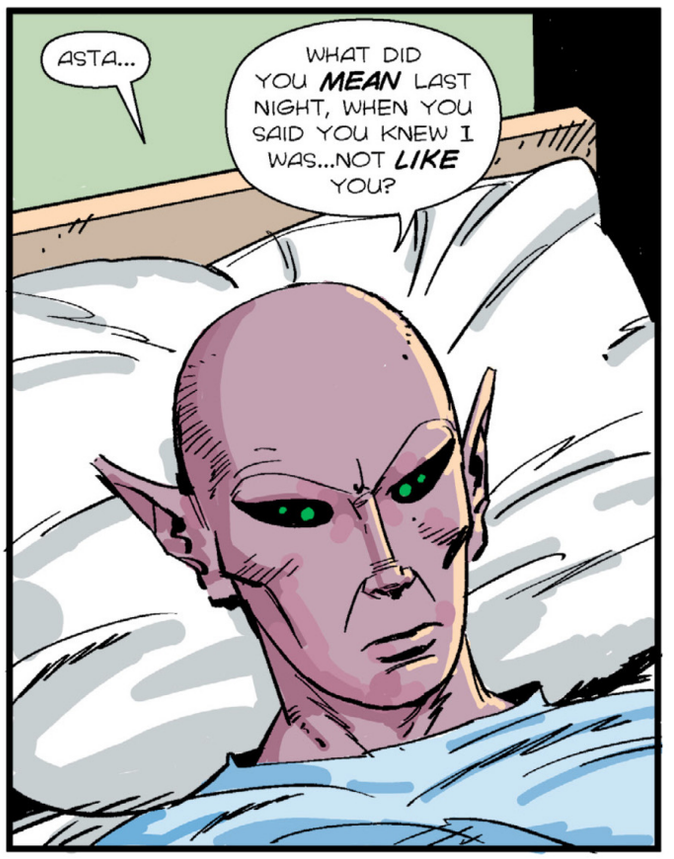

AM NOT.
NOT A KID, EITHER.
BET YOU NEED SOME COFFEE, THOUGH. I'M ON IT.
HI, DOC-- HOW YOU FEELING?
WELL, IT WAS HURTING WHEN I WOKE UP, BUT NOW THE PAINKILLERS MUST BE KICKING IN...
I'M FEELING A LITTLE VOOZY, ACTUALLY.
SOUNDS LIKE IT.
AND I THINK YOU MEAN "WOOZY."
ASTA...WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED LAST NIGHT?

WE CAUGHT THE BAD GUY, I ACCIDENTALLY SHOT YOU IN THE LEG--
THAT I REMEMBER.
--THEN I GAVE YOU A LOCAL ANESTHETIC, AND YOU JUST...PASSED OUT. SHOCK, I GUESS...
AND THEN I TOOK THIS OUT...
HERE, SOUVENIR.
YOU'RE LUCKY--IT MISSED THE BONE. DIDN'T EVEN GO IN TOO DEEP.
HA.
I SUPPOSE I MUST BE A PRETTY TOUGH GUY.
WELL, THE DAMAGE DIDN'T SEEM TOO BAD, BUT...
I'M NOT A SURGEON, HARRY. WE REALLY OUGHT TO GET SOMEONE ELSE TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOU.
NO.
ABSOLUTELY NOT.

I'M SURE YOU DID AS GOOD A JOB AS ANYBODY, ASTA...
AND I'M A FAST HEALER-- I'LL BE UP AND AROUND IN NO TIME, YOU'LL SEE.

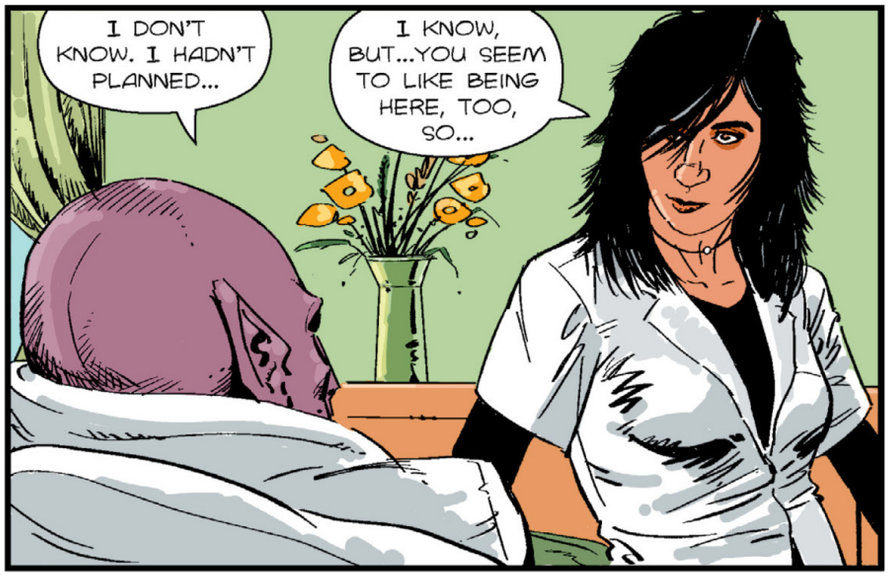
UH-UH.
NOT FOR AT LEAST A WEEK. NURSE'S ORDERS.


BUT...I'LL GO CRAZY JUST LYING HERE.
AT LEAST BRING ME IN A T.V. AND SOME D.V.D.S... THRILLERS, PREFERABLY.
OKAY-- WE CAN PROBABLY DO THAT.


ASTA...
WHAT DID YOU MEAN LAST NIGHT, WHEN YOU SAID YOU KNEW I WAS...NOT LIKE YOU?

DID I SAY THAT?

OH, I PROBABLY JUST MEANT...THAT I KNOW DOCTORS ARE DIFFERENT. SOMETIMES THEY GET ANTSY ABOUT MEDICAL PROCEDURES, BECAUSE THEY KNOW ALL THE RISKS.
LIKE, DOC HODGES WAS ALWAYS A REAL SCAREDY-CAT. COULDN'T STAND TO SEE HIS OWN BLOOD.
SO...I GUESS I WAS JUST TRYING TO REASSURE YOU THAT IT WAS ALL GOING TO BE OKAY.
AND EARLIER LAST NIGHT...
...YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT SOMETHING?
OH, THAT.
YEAH, SEE, I WAS KIND OF HOPING THAT I COULD TALK YOU INTO STAYING ON AS THE DOCTOR HERE.
BECAUSE I LIKE YOU, AND SO DO ELLEN AND THE OTHER NURSES...
AND SO DO THE PATIENTS. YOU'VE GOT A REAL WAY WITH PEOPLE, HARRY.


I DON'T KNOW. I HADN'T PLANNED...
I KNOW, BUT...YOU SEEM TO LIKE BEING HERE, TOO, SO...

I DON'T KNOW. I'LL...
...THINK ABOUT IT.

OKAY, DOC...
TIME TO EAT. I HOPE YOU'RE HUN--
HELLO?
ANYBODY HERE?

er, HI...
I JUST SAW THE MAYOR, AND HE TOLD ME TO COME STRAIGHT OVER HERE. MY NAME'S ETHAN...

I'M THE NEW DOCTOR.

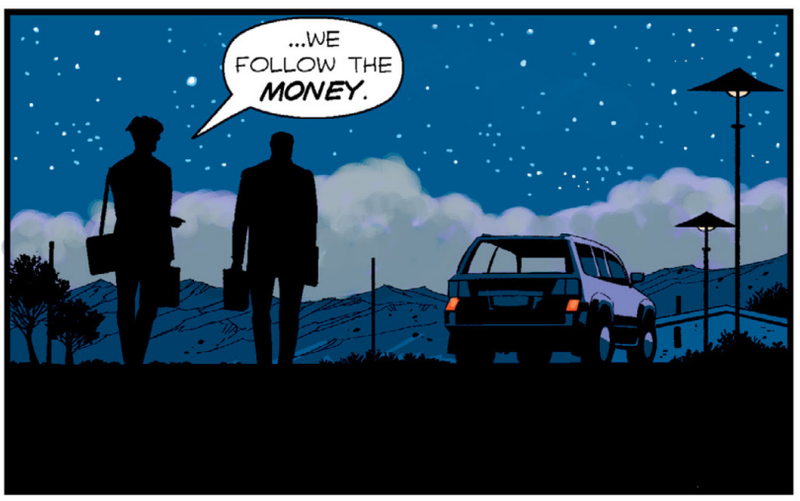
TWO YEARS, ELEVEN MONTHS AGO...
A HOAX?
SERIOUSLY?
THAT'S THE THINKING UPSTAIRS.
SO THAT'S A FAKE?
COULD BE. PHOTO ANALYSIS IS INCONCLUSIVE.
WE MANAGED TO PERSUADE THE BANK THAT IT'S JUST A GUY IN A RUBBER MASK... AND, YOU KNOW, MAYBE THAT'S ALL IT IS.
I SUPPOSE IT IS A LOT MORE BELIEVABLE THAN--
LITTLE GREEN MEN, YEAH.

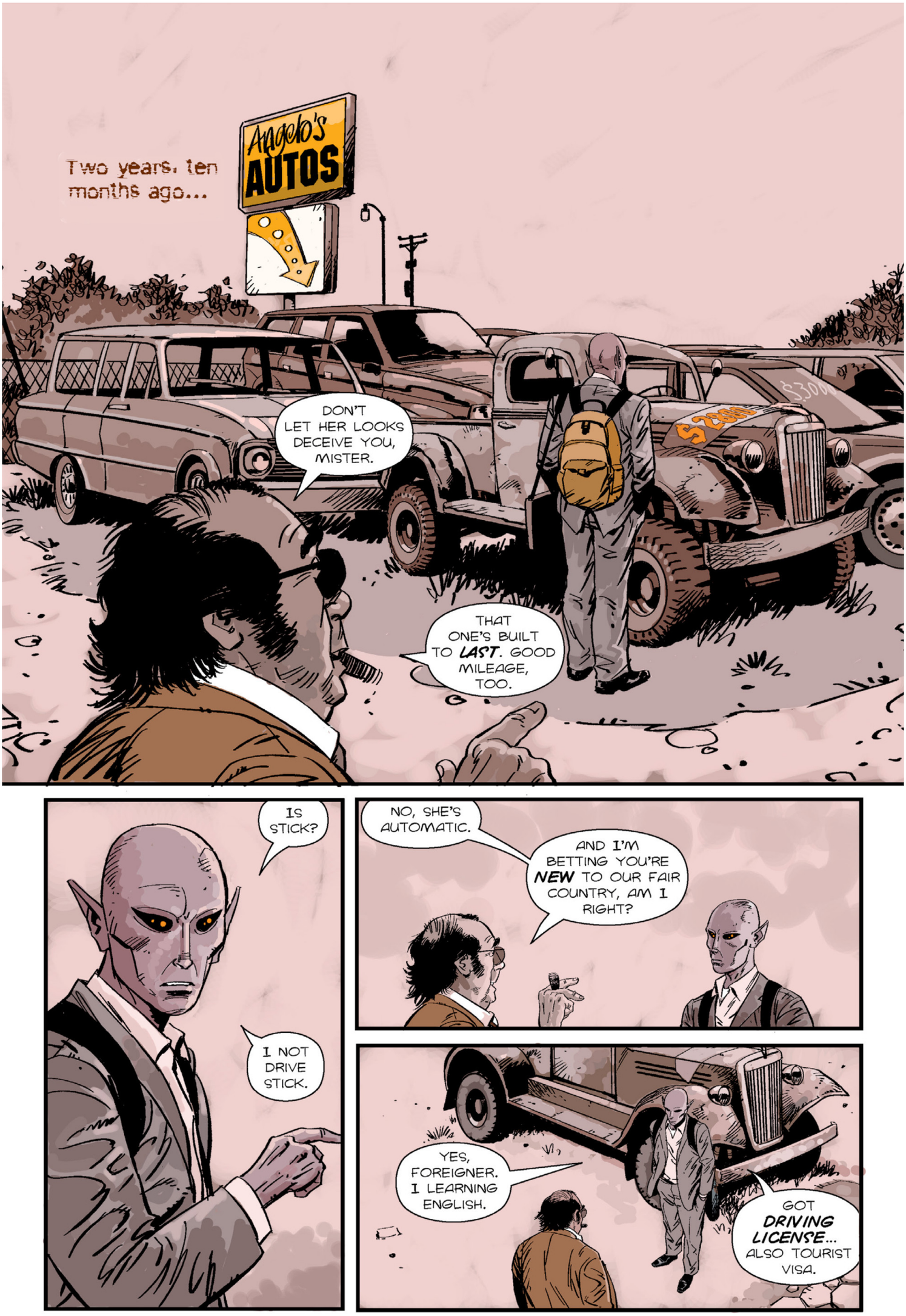
LET'S FACE IT, THIS COUNTRY HAS PLENTY OF ENEMIES WHO'D JUST LOVE TO SEE US WASTING OUR TIME ON A...
LITTLE-GREEN-MAN HUNT.
YEAH. NOT TO MENTION ALL THE OTHER AGENCIES WHO'D LIKE US TO LOOK BAD.

YOU THINK ANOTHER AGENCY HAS PRANKED US?

COULD BE. IF WE SCREW UP, OUR BUDGET GETS CUT, AND THEN SOMEONE ELSE'S INCREASES. YOU KNOW COUNTERINTELLIGENCE...
IT'S THAT "WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS" THING-- NOBODY KNOWS WHO'S CONNING WHOM.

OKAY, THEN... HOW DO WE PROCEED?
WE ACT LIKE WE'RE BUYING THE E.T. ANGLE WHILE WE TRY TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS. SO THE FIRST STEP IS...


...WE FOLLOW THE MONEY.


Two years, ten months ago...
Angelo's AUTOS
DON'T LET HER LOOKS DECEIVE YOU, MISTER.
THAT ONE'S BUILT TO LAST. GOOD MILEAGE, TOO.
IS STICK?
I NOT DRIVE STICK.
NO, SHE'S AUTOMATIC.
AND I'M BETTING YOU'RE NEW TO OUR FAIR COUNTRY, AM I RIGHT?
YES, FOREIGNER. I LEARNING ENGLISH.
GOT DRIVING LICENSE... ALSO TOURIST VISA.

WELL, GOOD FOR YOU, BUDDY.
NOW THEN, YOU LIKE THIS ONE, I CAN TELL, SO HERE'S WHAT I'M GONNA DO... I'M GONNA GIVE YOU A REAL GOOD DEAL ON HER.
OKAY.
GIVE DEAL.
WELL NOW, LET'S SEE...
HOW DOES TWO AND A HALF GRAND SOUND?
I GIVE TWO GRAND...
IS DEAL?
WELL NOW, AIN'T YOU THE SHARP ONE!
OH-KAY, THEN...FOR CASH, TWO GRAND IT IS.
I'LL JUST GET THE PAPERWORK, AND THEN SHE'S ALL YOURS.
sucker.

Sput
Sput
SKRRITCH
Sput
VROOM
VROOM
VERROOM

ONE MORE DAY, AND I SWEAR I'M GOING TO LOSE IT!
HARRY, HE'S GOT TO GO.

ASTA, ETHAN CAN'T BE THAT BAD.
GIVE HIM A CHANCE. IT'S ONLY BEEN A WEEK...

IN WHICH HE'S PISSED OFF EVERYBODY WHO WORKS HERE.
AND A WHOLE BUNCH OF PATIENTS.

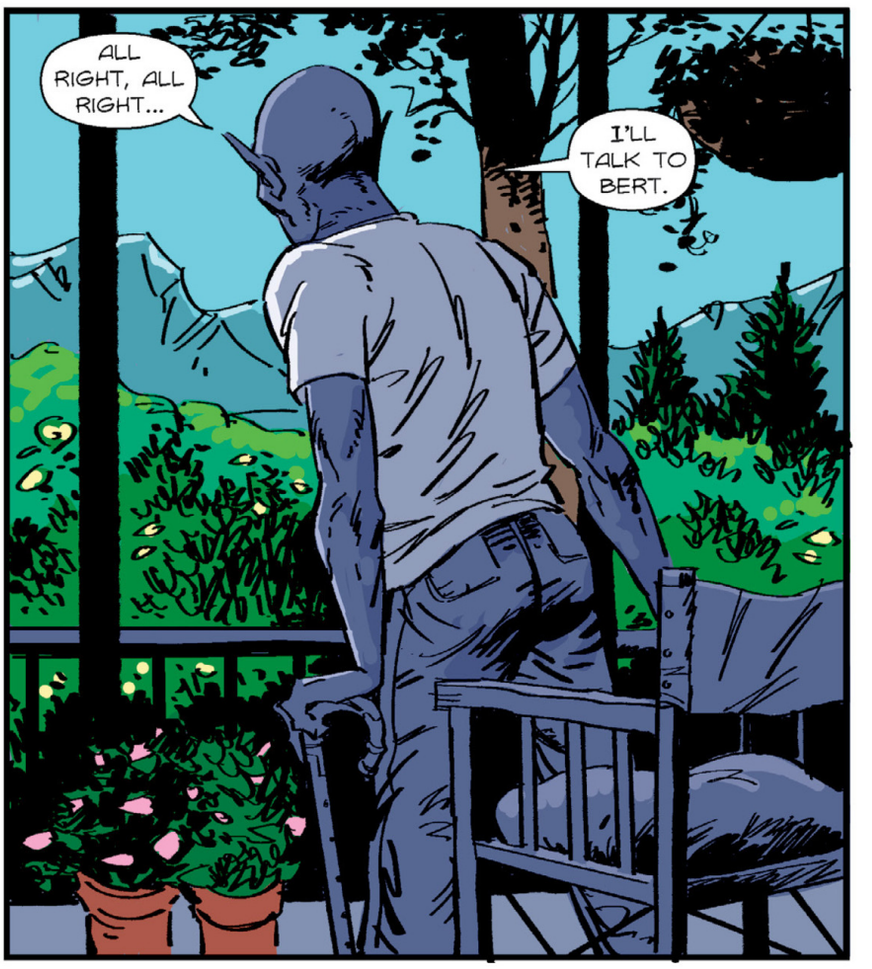
GOOD MORNING, DOC.
MY, BUT IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU UP AND ABOUT.

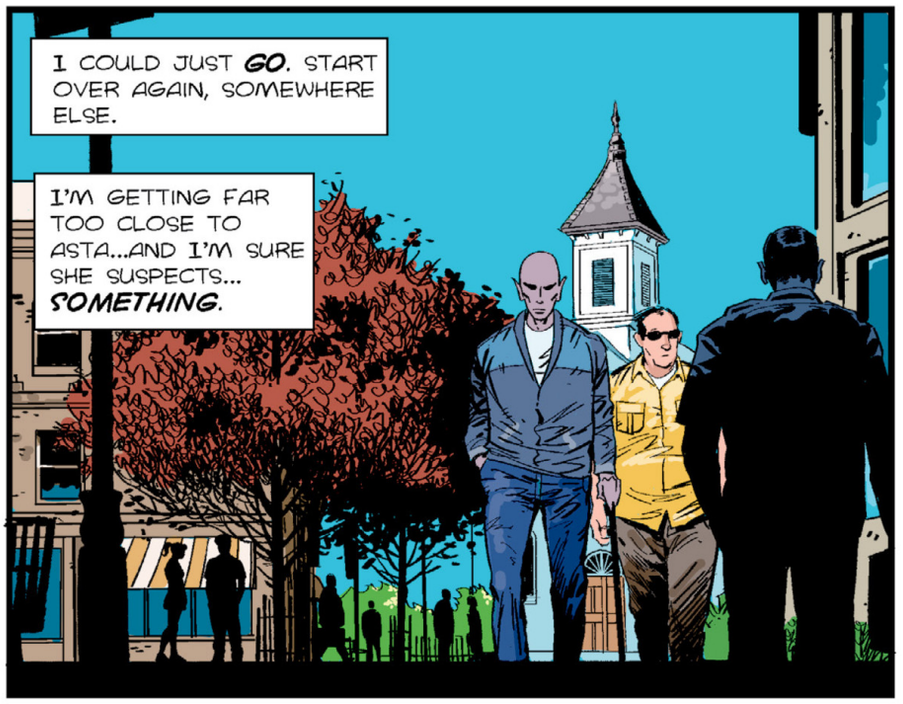
THANK YOU, CLARICE.
YES, I CAN WALK WITH A CANE NOW, BUT IT'LL BE A LITTLE WHILE MORE BEFORE I'M REALLY BACK IN ACTION.

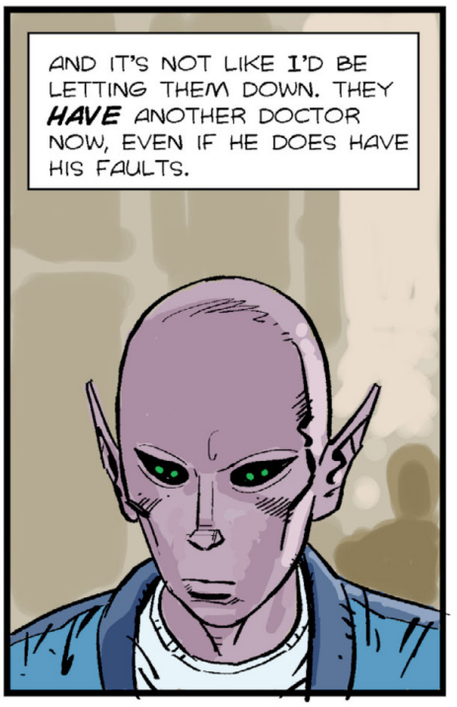
OH, DEAR...
DOES THAT MEAN I HAVE TO SEE THE YOUNG DOCTOR AGAIN TODAY?

COME ON, CLARICE.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

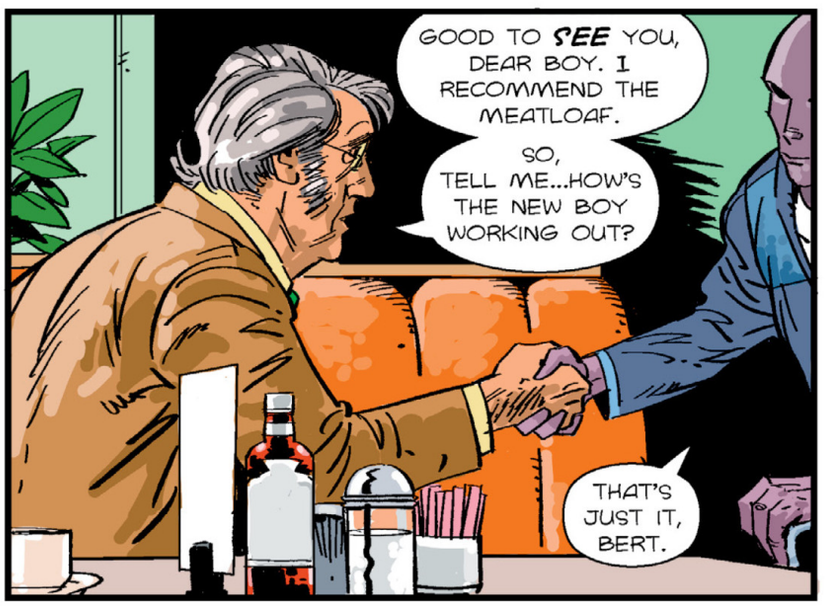
SEE?


ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT...
I'LL TALK TO BERT.


I COULD JUST GO. START OVER AGAIN, SOMEWHERE ELSE.
I'M GETTING FAR TOO CLOSE TO ASTA...AND I'M SURE SHE SUSPECTS... SOMETHING.


AND IT'S NOT LIKE I'D BE LETTING THEM DOWN. THEY HAVE ANOTHER DOCTOR NOW, EVEN IF HE DOES HAVE HIS FAULTS.

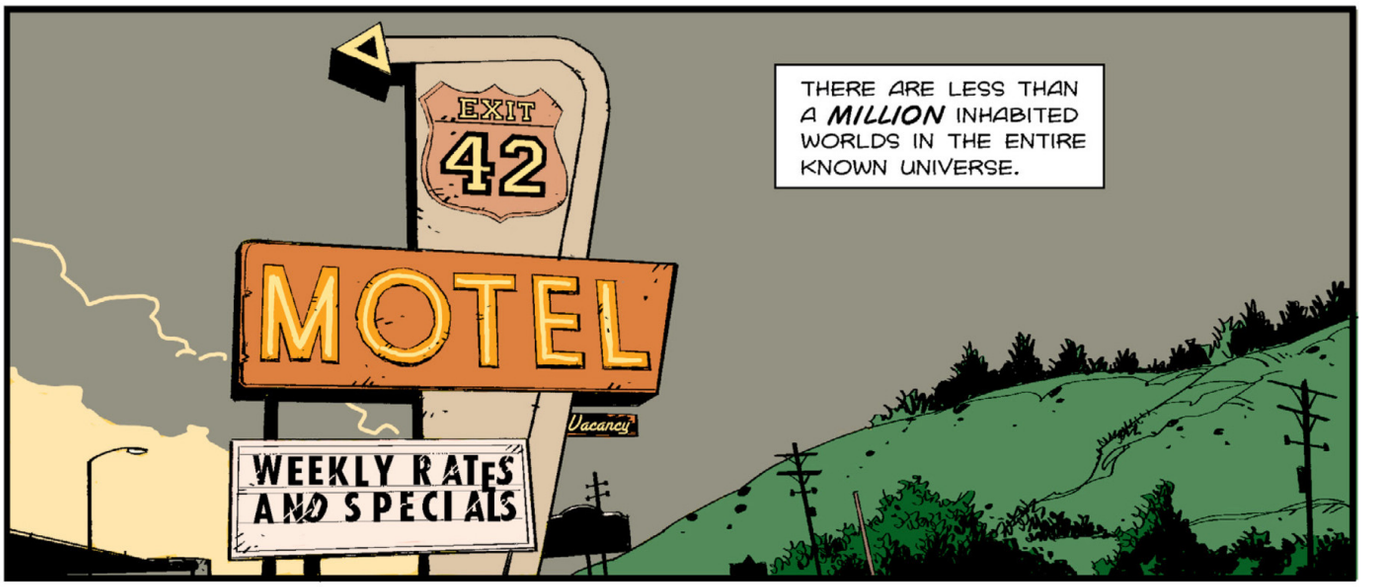
BUT THE TRUTH IS...I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE.
HEY, DOC...
WELCOME BACK.
THANKS.
HARRY!
JOIN ME.

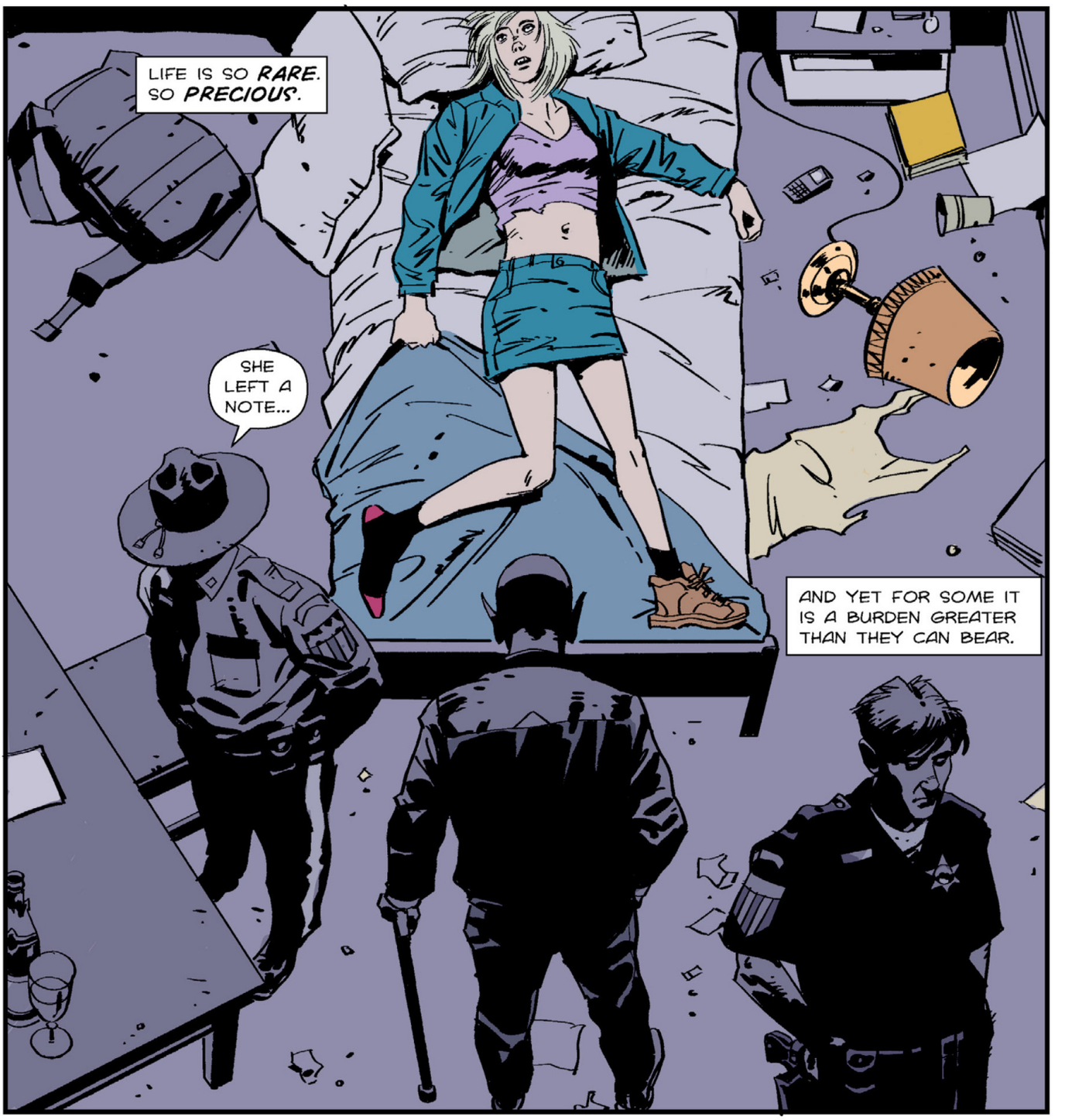

GOOD TO SEE YOU, DEAR BOY. I RECOMMEND THE MEATLOAF.
SO, TELL ME...HOW'S THE NEW BOY WORKING OUT?
THAT'S JUST IT, BERT.

HE IS A BOY, AND THAT'S CAUSING PROBLEMS.

HALF OF THE TIME HE'S TOO ARROGANT--WHICH UPSETS THE NURSES--AND THE OTHER HALF HE'S TOO HESITANT AND NERVOUS.
PATIENTS DON'T LIKE NERVOUS. IT MAKES THEM NERVOUS.
OH, DEAR... AND HE SEEMED SO PROMISING, TOO.
BUT I'M AFRAID WE'RE CONTRACTUALLY STUCK WITH HIM FOR THREE MONTHS. A TRIAL PERIOD, YOU UNDERSTAND.
THEN HOW DOES THIS SOUND...
I'LL OVERSEE ETHAN FOR THOSE THREE MONTHS, SEE HE DOESN'T CAUSE TOO MUCH DAMAGE...AND AFTER THAT I'LL STAY ON AS THE TOWN DOCTOR, FOR AT LEAST A YEAR.
YOU REALLY MEAN IT?
YES, BUT I WANT CABLE T.V. INSTALLED.
CONSIDER IT DONE.
HARRY, I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH THIS PLEASES ME--AND I'M GLAD TO SEE THAT ALL THOSE AWFUL MURDERS HAVEN'T PUT YOU OFF OUR LITTLE COMMUNITY.

AT LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH ANY MORE OF THEM.
GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, HARRY...
YOU GOT TIME TO COME LOOK AT A BODY WITH US?
OF COURSE.
BE RIGHT WITH YOU.
COULD BE YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT THAT, BERT...
WE'LL HAVE THIS LUNCH ANOTHER TIME.
AND NOW I FEEL ALIVE AGAIN, BECAUSE THE GAME'S AFOOT...
LIMPING SLIGHTLY, BUT STILL AFOOT...


EXIT
42
MOTEL
Vacancy
WEEKLY RATES
AND SPECIALS
THERE ARE LESS THAN A MILLION INHABITED WORLDS IN THE ENTIRE KNOWN UNIVERSE.


LIFE IS SO RARE. SO PRECIOUS.
SHE LEFT A NOTE...
AND YET FOR SOME IT IS A BURDEN GREATER THAN THEY CAN BEAR.

"SOMETIMES I DON'T LIKE MYSELF MUCH."
DAMMIT.
EVERYBODY FEELS LIKE THAT SOMETIMES, DON'T THEY?
BUT THIS...
IT'S... SUCH A WASTE.
OKAY, BRAD--WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
GO GRAB SOME LUNCH OR SOMETHING.
CHIEF, I'M FINE--
NO, YOU'RE NOT.
TAKE OFF FOR A WHILE--THAT'S AN ORDER.

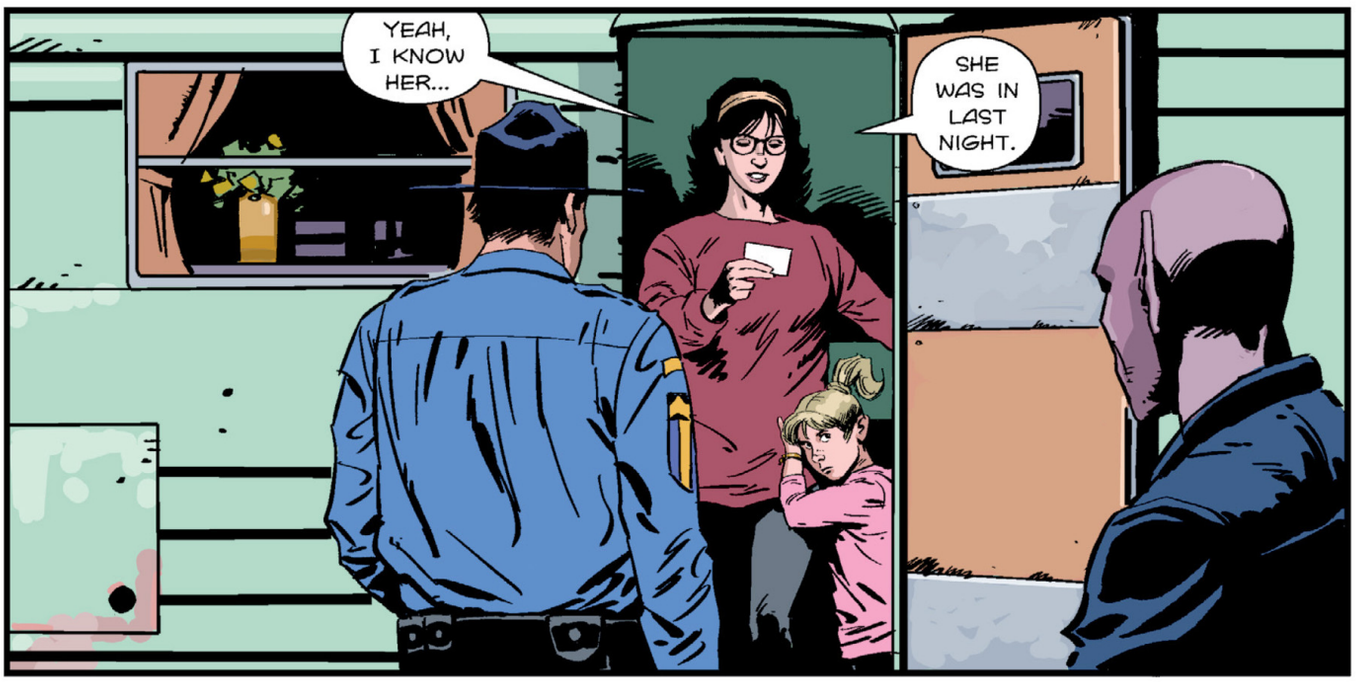
IF I'D KNOWN THIS WAS A SUICIDE I'D NEVER HAVE BROUGHT HIM ALONG.
HIS SISTER KILLED HERSELF, COUPLE OF YEARS BACK.
YOU OKAY?
YES... JUST NEED TO SIT DOWN FOR A WHILE.
LEG HURTS IF I STAND FOR TOO LONG.
SO... WHAT KILLED HER?
NO SIGN OF ANY PILLS, WHICH LEAVES...
THE CHAMPAGNE.
BRUT 2009
BRUT IMPERIAL
MOËT
CHAMPAGNE

NO.
DON'T TOUCH IT. DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.
I WASN'T GOING TO.
NO DISCERNIBLE SMELL, SO...
COULD BE ARSENIC...
WHICH WOULD FIT WITH THE STATE OF THE BODY.
SHE VOMITED AND THRASHED AROUND BEFORE SHE DIED.

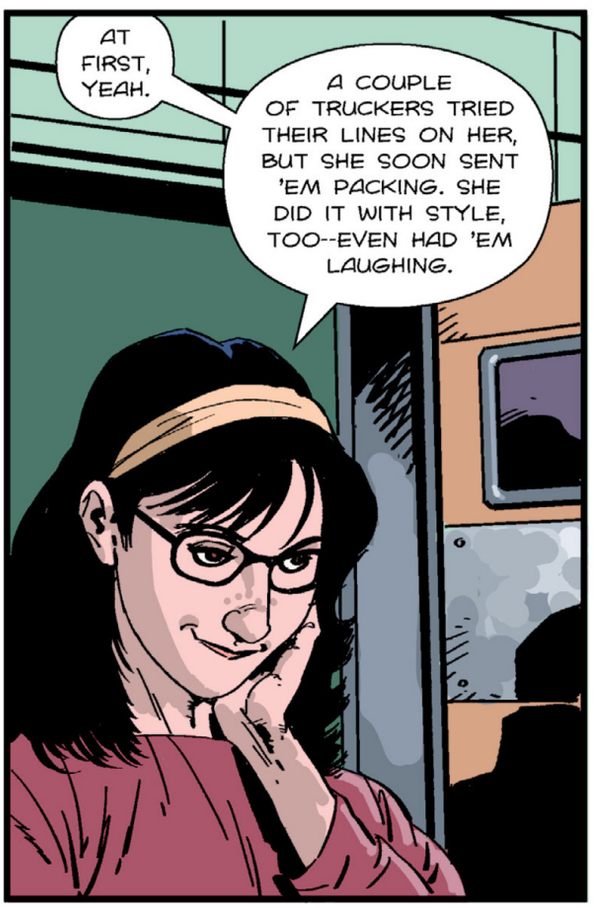
NAME'S SHANNON RILEY, ORIGINALLY FROM SAN FRANCISCO... NOW A CHEMISTRY STUDENT IN SEATTLE.
WELL, THAT WOULD EXPLAIN HOW SHE GOT HER HANDS ON SOME ARSENIC...IF IT IS ARSENIC.
BUT... SEATTLE'S 200 MILES AWAY...
WHAT WAS SHE DOING HERE?
SEEN THAT BEFORE, WHEN I WORKED BACK EAST.
SOMEONE REALLY WANTS TO KILL THEMSELVES, THEY TRAVEL TO ANOTHER TOWN, WHERE NOBODY KNOWS THEM.
NO ONE TO TALK THEM OUT OF IT, SEE?
SO THEY TREAT THEMSELVES TO CHAMPAGNE, PROBABLY HAVE A NICE DINNER FIRST, THEN...
MIKE, IF THIS WAS SUICIDE, THEN...WHY DIDN'T SHE WRITE HER NOTE ON THE HOTEL NOTEPAPER? THERE'S A STACK OF IT IN THE DRAWER.
THIS LOOKS LIKE IT WAS TORN FROM A NOTEBOOK. SO...WHERE IS IT? AND WHERE'S THE PEN?

NO NOTEBOOK HERE. NO PEN, EITHER.
MAYBE SHE WROTE IT BEFORE SHE CAME.
SEEMS...
UNLIKELY.
CHIEF...
I GOT SOMETHING.
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO GET LOST.
WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?
ROLLING IN GARBAGE?
YEAH, THE DUMPSTER OUT BACK... BUT I FOUND THIS.
THERE'S A GLASS IN HERE MATCHES THAT ONE, AND A SMALL ENVELOPE WITH TRACES OF WHITE POWDER--COULD BE HEROIN, BUT I HAVEN'T TASTED IT.

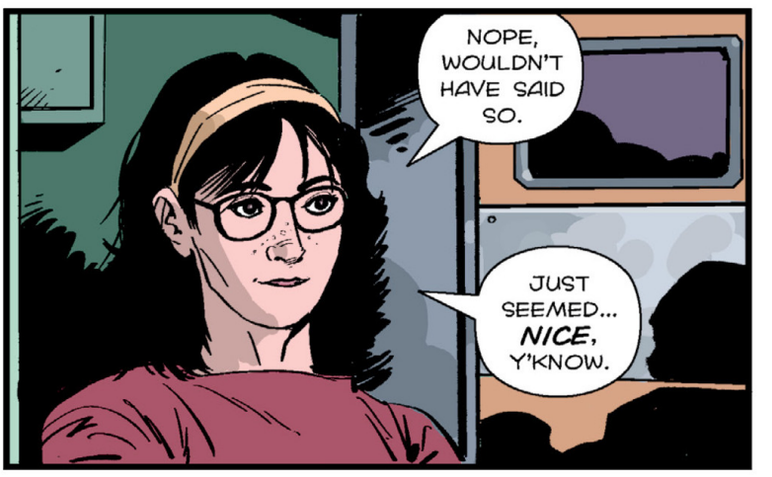
GOOD THING YOU DIDN'T.
IT COULD BE POISON.
IF IT IS...
THEN THIS IS MURDER.
STAY HERE AND WAIT FOR FORENSICS...AND TELL THE CORONER I WANT THE POST-MORTEM RESULTS A.S.A.P.
YOU GOT IT.
TELL THEM TO MAKE SURE TO CHECK IF SHE WAS PREGNANT.
BECAUSE SHE WAS.
CALL ME IF YOU NEED ME-- I'M GOING TO TRY AND FIND OUT WHAT THE GIRL WAS DOING LAST NIGHT.
MIND IF I TAG ALONG?
YOU'VE GOT ME CURIOUS NOW.

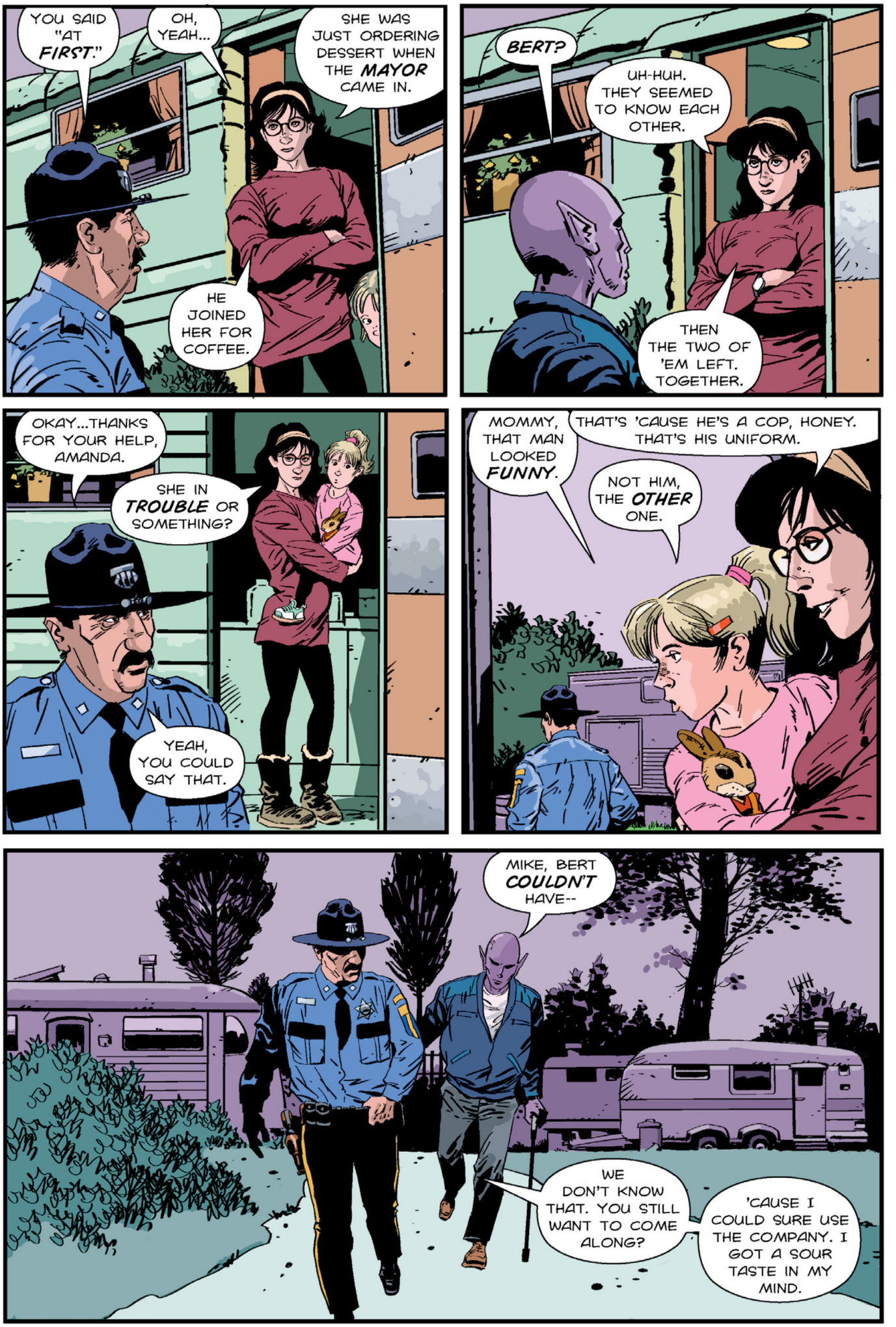

YEAH, I KNOW HER...
SHE WAS IN LAST NIGHT.

HAD A STEAK DINNER WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS, LEFT A GOOD TIP.
AND SHE WAS ALONE?


AT FIRST, YEAH.
A COUPLE OF TRUCKERS TRIED THEIR LINES ON HER, BUT SHE SOON SENT 'EM PACKING. SHE DID IT WITH STYLE, TOO--EVEN HAD 'EM LAUGHING.

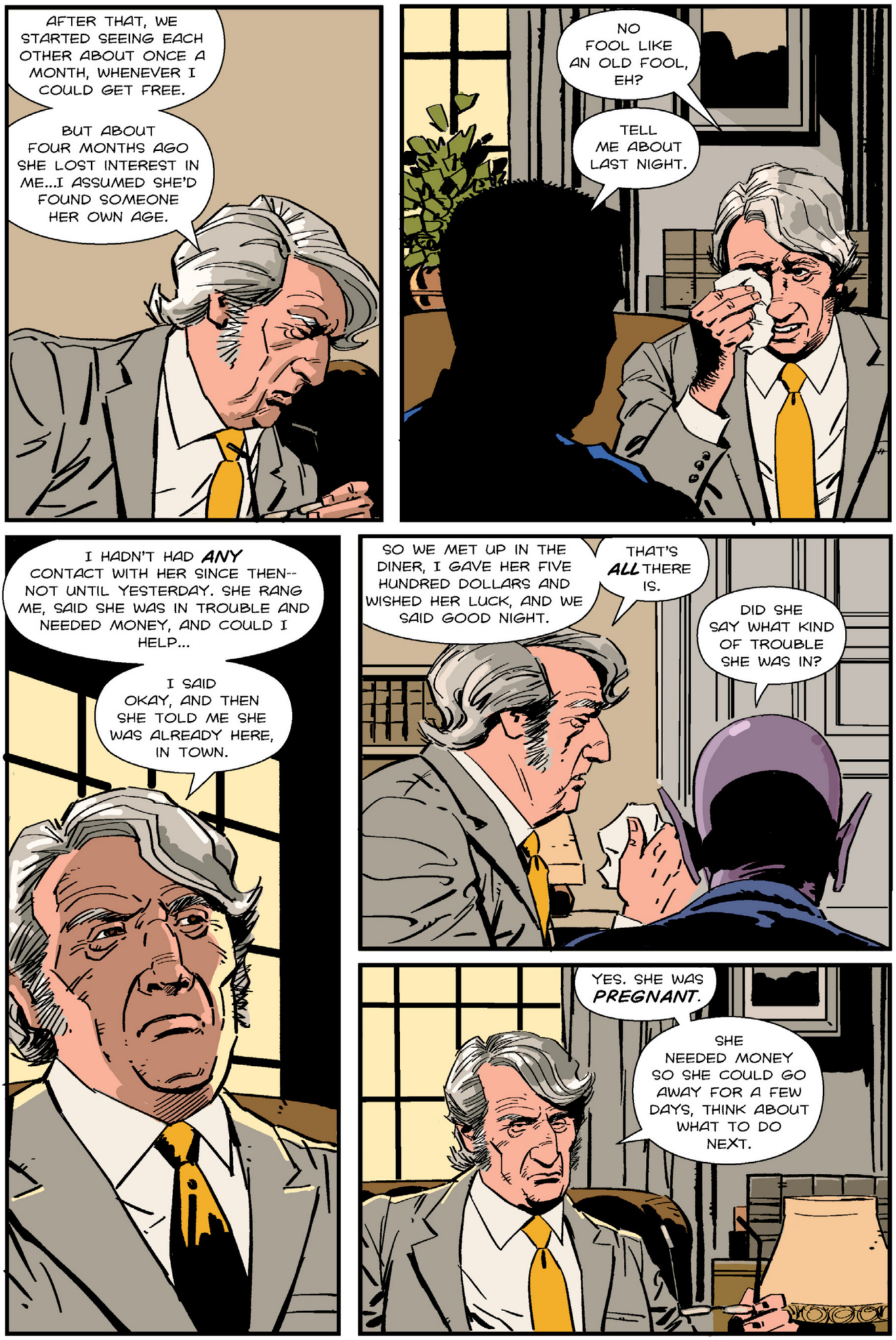
SO SHE DIDN'T SEEM SAD? LONELY?


NOPE, WOULDN'T HAVE SAID SO.
JUST SEEMED... NICE, Y'KNOW.


YOU SAID "AT FIRST."
OH, YEAH...
SHE WAS JUST ORDERING DESSERT WHEN THE MAYOR CAME IN.
HE JOINED HER FOR COFFEE.
BERT?
UH-HUH. THEY SEEMED TO KNOW EACH OTHER.
THEN THE TWO OF 'EM LEFT. TOGETHER.
OKAY...THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, AMANDA.
SHE IN TROUBLE OR SOMETHING?
YEAH, YOU COULD SAY THAT.
MOMMY, THAT MAN LOOKED FUNNY.
THAT'S 'CAUSE HE'S A COP, HONEY. THAT'S HIS UNIFORM.
NOT HIM, THE OTHER ONE.
MIKE, BERT COULDN'T HAVE--
WE DON'T KNOW THAT. YOU STILL WANT TO COME ALONG?
'CAUSE I COULD SURE USE THE COMPANY. I GOT A SOUR TASTE IN MY MIND.

AFTERNOON, GENTLEMEN...I SUPPOSE THIS IS ABOUT THE BODY YOU FOUND?
PLEASE TELL ME IT WAS NATURAL CAUSES.
WISH I COULD, BUT I CAN'T.
BERT, IT WAS SHANNON RILEY.
SHANNON?
OH, GOD...
HOW?
WE THINK IT WAS MURDER, BERT...
MADE TO LOOK LIKE A SUICIDE.
BUT WHO WOULD...
WAIT NOW, YOU DON'T THINK I...

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME THE WHOLE STORY...
...THEN I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I THINK.
SO YOU KNEW HER? BEFORE LAST NIGHT?
YES.
INTIMATELY?
I MET HER IN SEATTLE LAST YEAR, IN A HOTEL BAR.
I WAS THERE FOR A CONFERENCE.
"YOU KNOW HOW IT IS--TWO LONELY PEOPLE, A FEW COCKTAILS...
"IT JUST...HAPPENED."


AFTER THAT, WE STARTED SEEING EACH OTHER ABOUT ONCE A MONTH, WHENEVER I COULD GET FREE.
BUT ABOUT FOUR MONTHS AGO SHE LOST INTEREST IN ME...I ASSUMED SHE'D FOUND SOMEONE HER OWN AGE.
NO FOOL LIKE AN OLD FOOL, EH?
TELL ME ABOUT LAST NIGHT.
I HADN'T HAD ANY CONTACT WITH HER SINCE THEN--NOT UNTIL YESTERDAY. SHE RANG ME, SAID SHE WAS IN TROUBLE AND NEEDED MONEY, AND COULD I HELP...
I SAID OKAY, AND THEN SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS ALREADY HERE, IN TOWN.
SO WE MET UP IN THE DINER, I GAVE HER FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS AND WISHED HER LUCK, AND WE SAID GOOD NIGHT.
THAT'S ALL THERE IS.
DID SHE SAY WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE SHE WAS IN?
YES. SHE WAS PREGNANT.
SHE NEEDED MONEY SO SHE COULD GO AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS, THINK ABOUT WHAT TO DO NEXT.

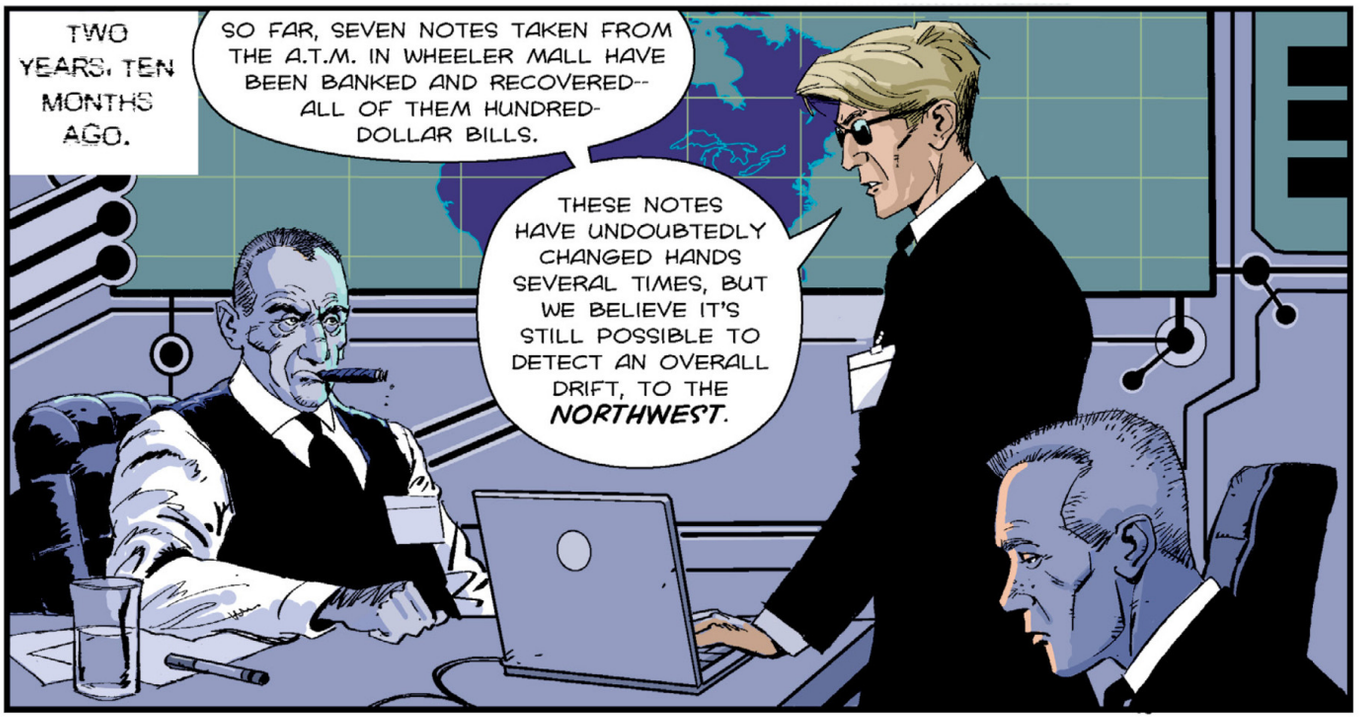
WHAT?
IT WASN'T MINE, FOR GOD'S SAKE. I WAS JUST HELPING OUT...AN OLD FRIEND.
A GIRL--A YOUNG GIRL--THAT YOU SLEPT WITH GETS PREGNANT, AND THEN ENDS UP DEAD.
IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD, BERT.
SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY, EITHER.
BERT, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO COME IN AND MAKE A STATEMENT. YOU SHOULD CALL YOUR ATTORNEY NOW.
I DON'T NEED A LAWYER.
I AM A LAWYER.
MIKE'S RIGHT, BERT.
YOU DO NEED AN ATTORNEY.
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE INNOCENT.

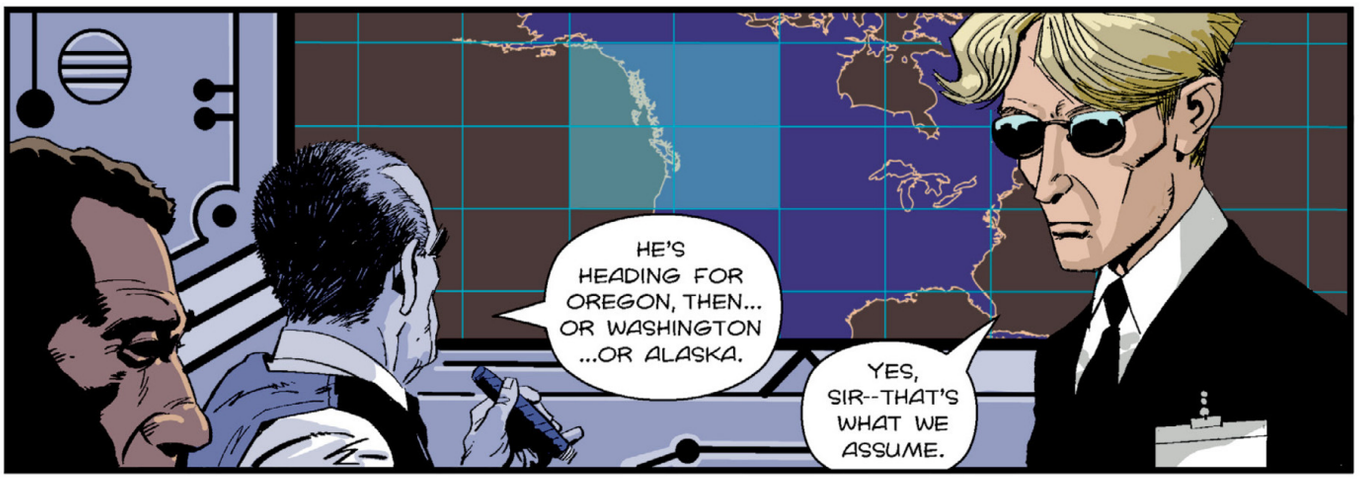
NAH.
I DON'T BUY IT.
I MEAN, HIM BANGING SOME GIRL HALF HIS AGE--THAT I BELIEVE.
BUT MURDER? NO WAY.
NO.
THAT'S WHAT I THINK, TOO.
GOSSIP?
SO... WHO'S DONE WHAT TO WHO?
A...FRIEND OF MINE IS IN TROUBLE.
I SPENT MOST OF LAST NIGHT TRYING TO THINK HOW TO GET HIM OUT OF IT.

AND THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT. I HAVE TO GO TO SEATTLE.
SORRY, ETHAN. I'LL ONLY BE GONE A COUPLE OF DAYS. THINK YOU CAN MANAGE HERE?
SURE.
AFTER ALL, I'VE GOT THE LOVELY ASTA HERE TO HELP.
WHOA, HARRY...
JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DO THAT THE COPS CAN'T?
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT...BERT NEEDS ALL THE HELP HE CAN GET. I HAVE TO AT LEAST TRY TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH.
AND HOW DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO GET THERE?
I WAS PLANNING TO DRIVE--
WITH THAT LEG? I DON'T THINK SO.

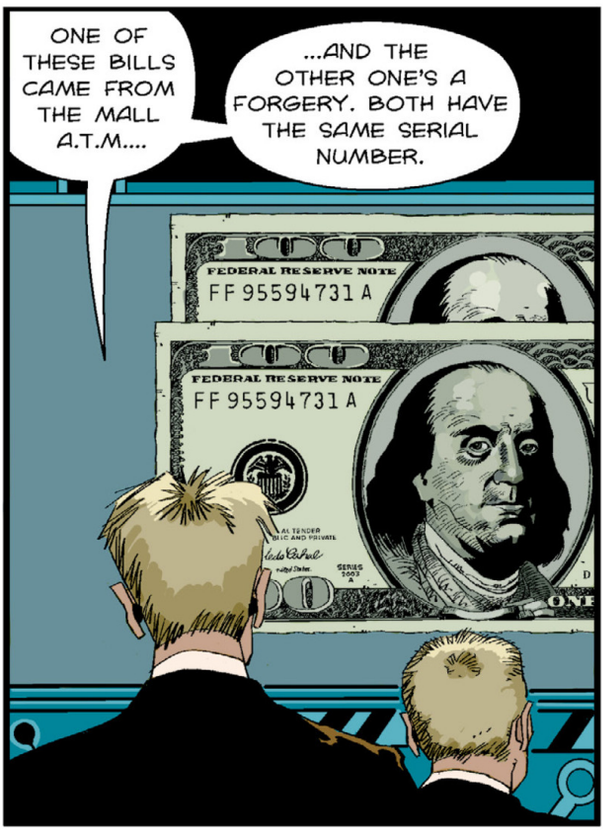
I'LL DRIVE YOU.
WHEN ARE YOU PLANNING TO GO?
er...NOW, ACTUALLY.
BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING TODAY...
SO? I'LL GET MARCIE OR ELLEN OR ZOE TO COVER MY SHIFTS.
THAT OKAY WITH YOU, ETHAN?
DO I HAVE A CHOICE?
NOPE, NOT REALLY.
OKAY.
GIVE MY REGARDS TO THE SPACE NEEDLE.

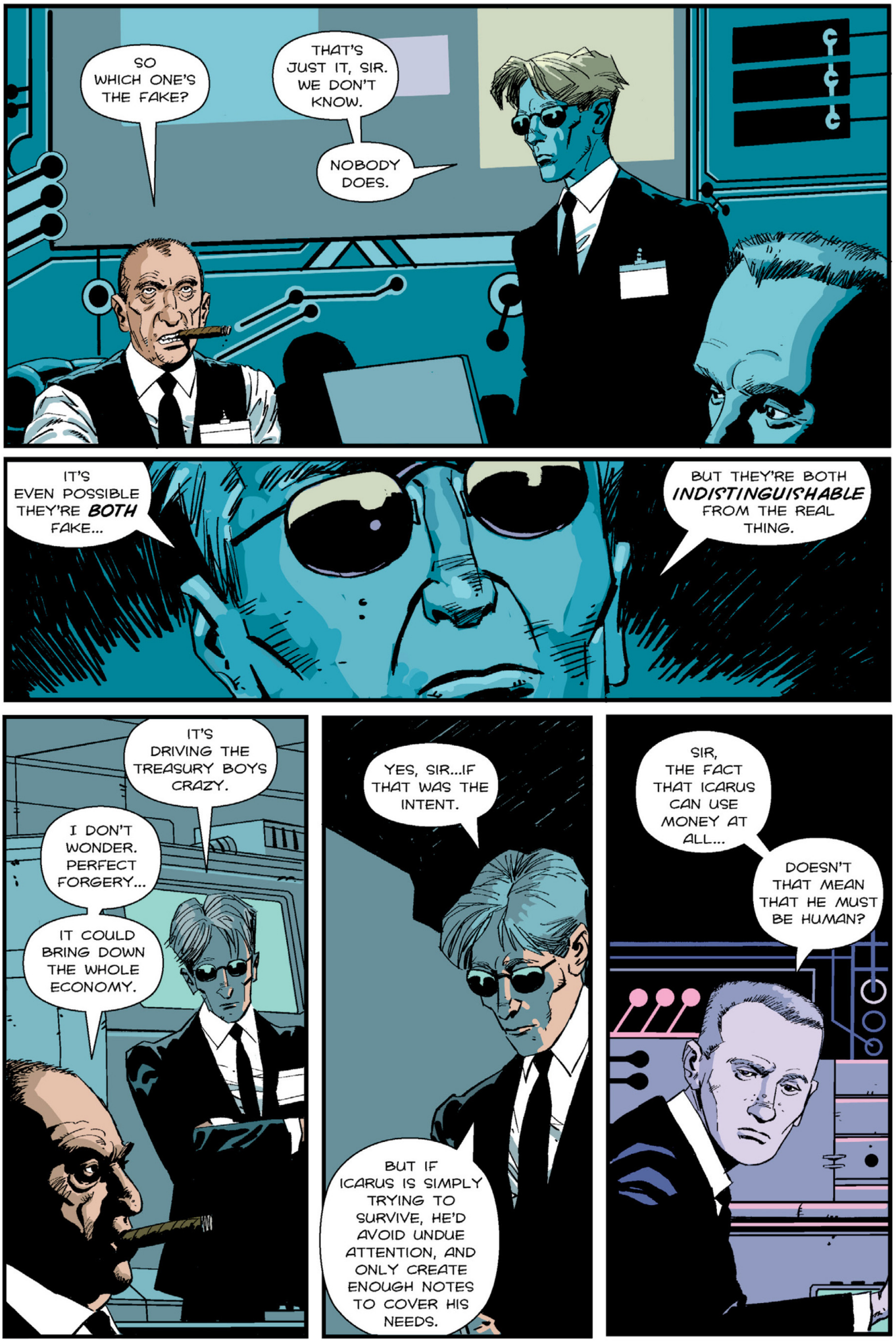
THE WHAT?
YOU KNOW...THAT TALL THING ON THE FRASIER LOGO.
ON THE WHAT?
OKAY, THAT'S SORTED. MARCIE'S ON HER WAY OVER. YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME, HARRY.
WE JUST NEED TO SWING BY MY PLACE AND PICK UP SOME CLOTHES AND STUFF.
I SHOULD GET SOME CASH OUT AS WELL...
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT MONEY.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO DRIVE US ALL THE WAY, I THINK IT'S ONLY FAIR THAT I SHOULD COVER OUR EXPENSES.
DON'T BE STUPID.
I VOLUNTEERED FOR THIS, REMEMBER?
IT'S OKAY, REALLY.
I CAN AFFORD IT.


TWO YEARS, TEN MONTHS AGO.
SO FAR, SEVEN NOTES TAKEN FROM THE A.T.M. IN WHEELER MALL HAVE BEEN BANKED AND RECOVERED--ALL OF THEM HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS.
THESE NOTES HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY CHANGED HANDS SEVERAL TIMES, BUT WE BELIEVE IT'S STILL POSSIBLE TO DETECT AN OVERALL DRIFT, TO THE NORTHWEST.


HE'S HEADING FOR OREGON, THEN... OR WASHINGTON ...OR ALASKA.
YES, SIR--THAT'S WHAT WE ASSUME.

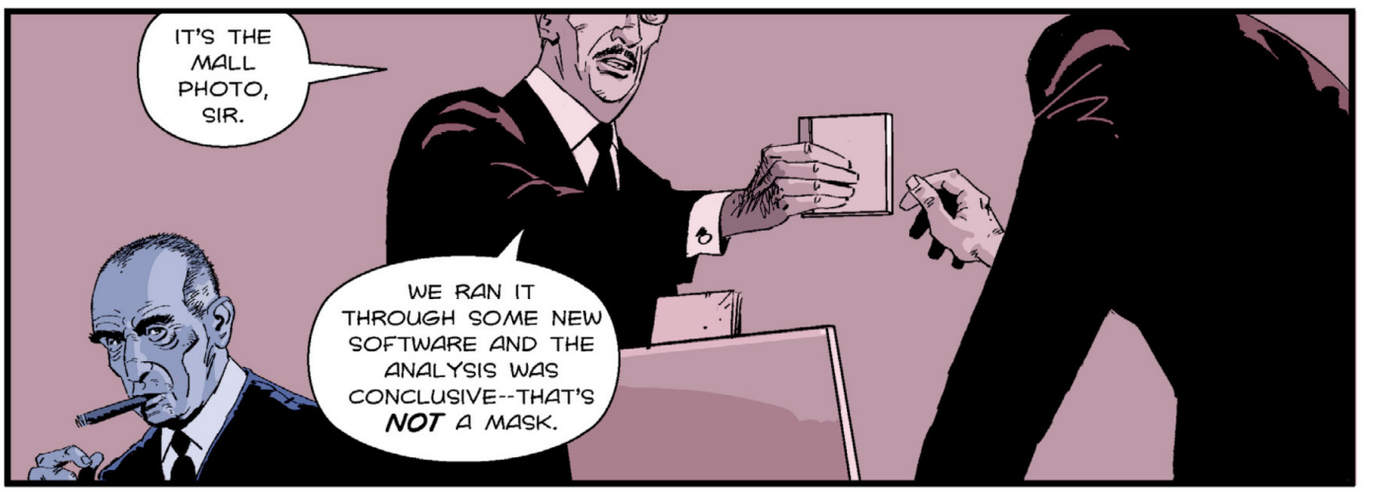
WELL, HE'LL NEED MORE CASH SOONER OR LATER...
AT LEAST WE'LL GET A PRECISE FIX ON HIM WHEN HE HITS AN A.T.M. AGAIN.
er... PERHAPS NOT, SIR. YOU SEE...


ONE OF THESE BILLS CAME FROM THE MALL A.T.M....
...AND THE OTHER ONE'S A FORGERY. BOTH HAVE THE SAME SERIAL NUMBER.
FEDERAL RESERVE NOTE
FF 95594731 A
FEDERAL RESERVE NOTE
FF 95594731 A

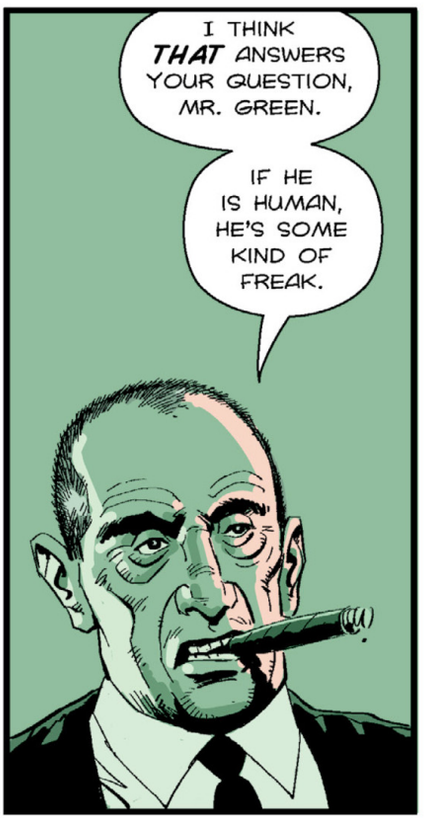

SO WHICH ONE'S THE FAKE?
THAT'S JUST IT, SIR. WE DON'T KNOW.
NOBODY DOES.
IT'S EVEN POSSIBLE THEY'RE BOTH FAKE...
BUT THEY'RE BOTH INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE REAL THING.
IT'S DRIVING THE TREASURY BOYS CRAZY.
I DON'T WONDER. PERFECT FORGERY...
IT COULD BRING DOWN THE WHOLE ECONOMY.
YES, SIR...IF THAT WAS THE INTENT.
BUT IF ICARUS IS SIMPLY TRYING TO SURVIVE, HE'D AVOID UNDUE ATTENTION, AND ONLY CREATE ENOUGH NOTES TO COVER HIS NEEDS.
SIR, THE FACT THAT ICARUS CAN USE MONEY AT ALL...
DOESN'T THAT MEAN THAT HE MUST BE HUMAN?

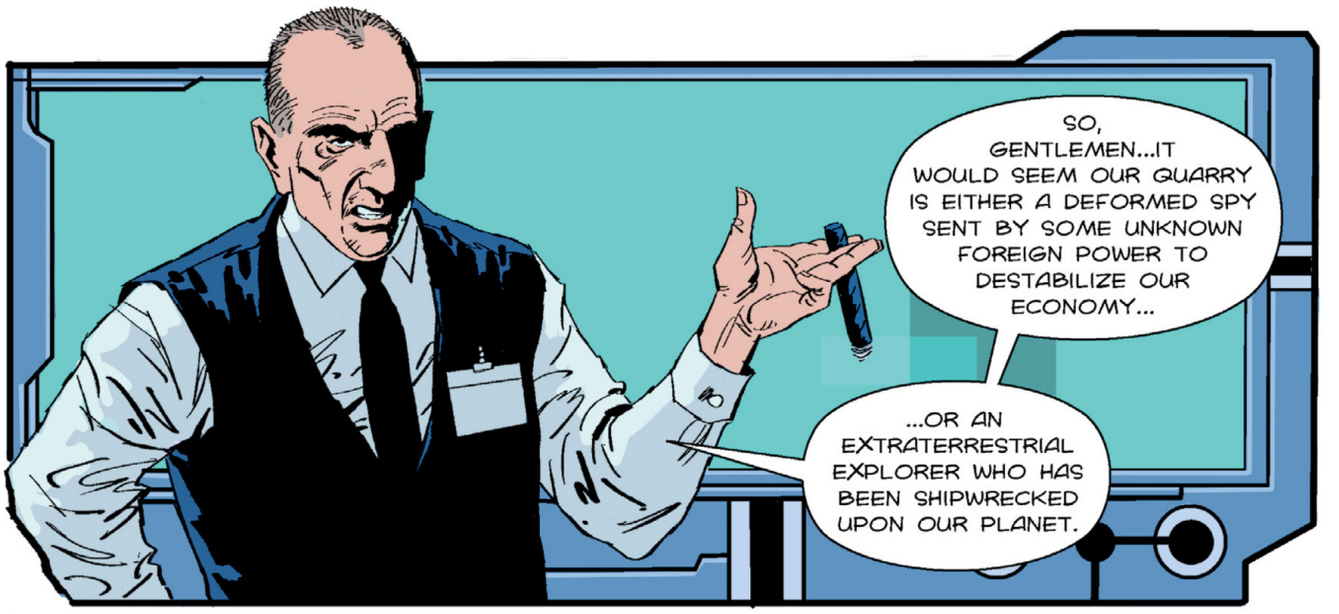
NOT NECESSARILY.
HE MAY BE ABLE TO DISGUISE HIMSELF IN SOME--YES? WHAT IS IT?

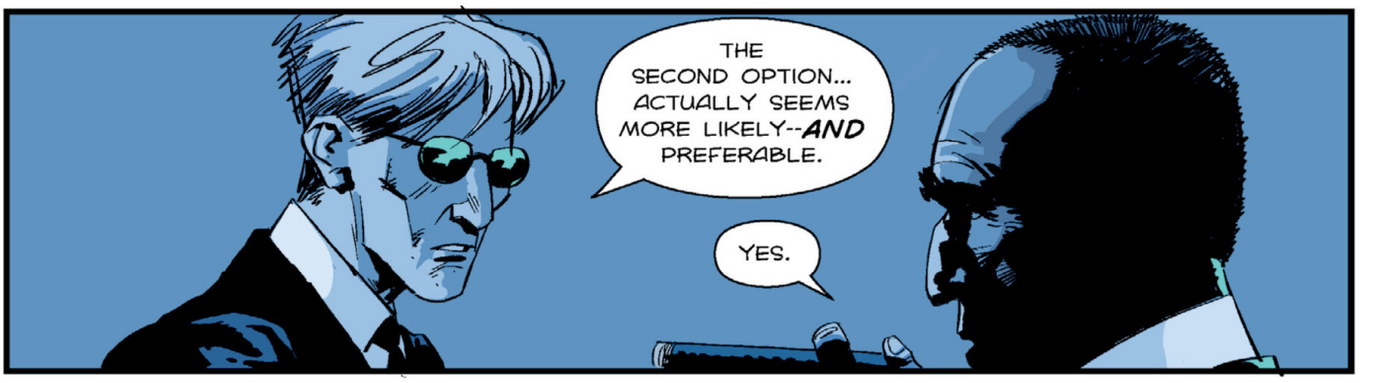
I GAVE ORDERS NOT TO BE DISTURBED.
I KNOW, SIR...BUT THIS IS AN ICARUS MATTER, SO I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO KNOW IMMEDIATELY.

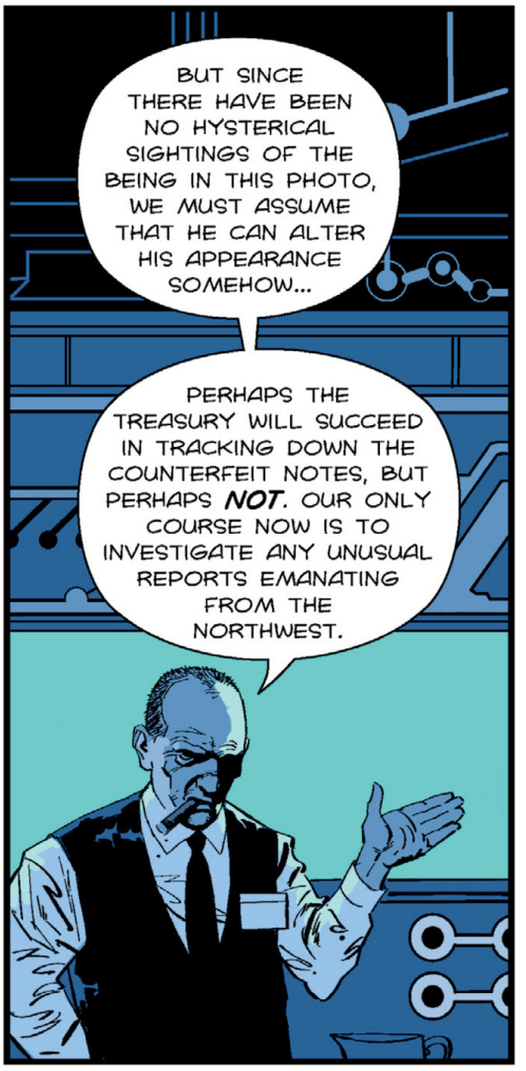

IT'S THE MALL PHOTO, SIR.
WE RAN IT THROUGH SOME NEW SOFTWARE AND THE ANALYSIS WAS CONCLUSIVE--THAT'S NOT A MASK.

THERE COULD BE SOME MAKEUP INVOLVED, BUT...
...THAT'S DEFINITELY SKIN WE'RE SEEING.


I THINK THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION, MR. GREEN.
IF HE IS HUMAN, HE'S SOME KIND OF FREAK.

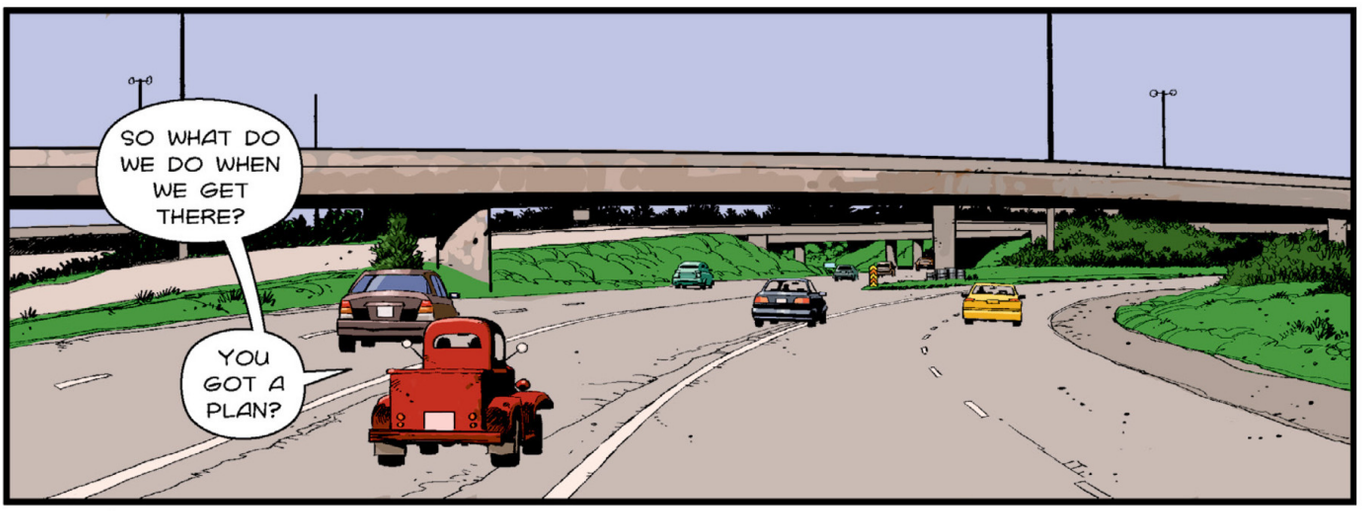

SO, GENTLEMEN...IT WOULD SEEM OUR QUARRY IS EITHER A DEFORMED SPY SENT BY SOME UNKNOWN FOREIGN POWER TO DESTABILIZE OUR ECONOMY...
...OR AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL EXPLORER WHO HAS BEEN SHIPWRECKED UPON OUR PLANET.


THE SECOND OPTION... ACTUALLY SEEMS MORE LIKELY--AND PREFERABLE.
YES.

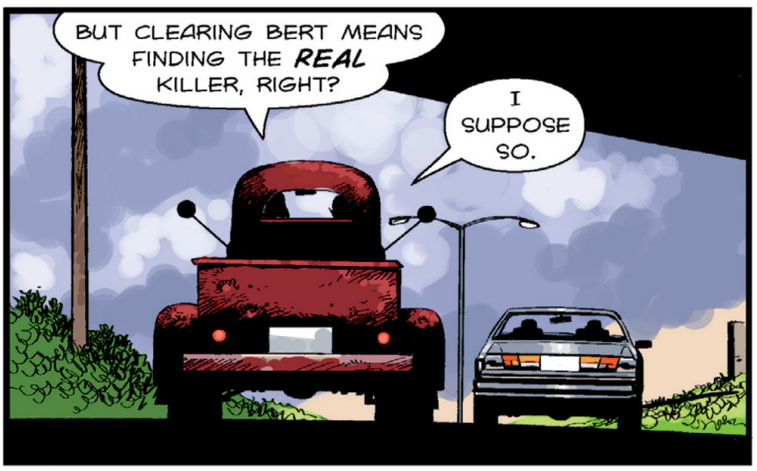

BUT SINCE THERE HAVE BEEN NO HYSTERICAL SIGHTINGS OF THE BEING IN THIS PHOTO, WE MUST ASSUME THAT HE CAN ALTER HIS APPEARANCE SOMEHOW...
PERHAPS THE TREASURY WILL SUCCEED IN TRACKING DOWN THE COUNTERFEIT NOTES, BUT PERHAPS NOT. OUR ONLY COURSE NOW IS TO INVESTIGATE ANY UNUSUAL REPORTS EMANATING FROM THE NORTHWEST.

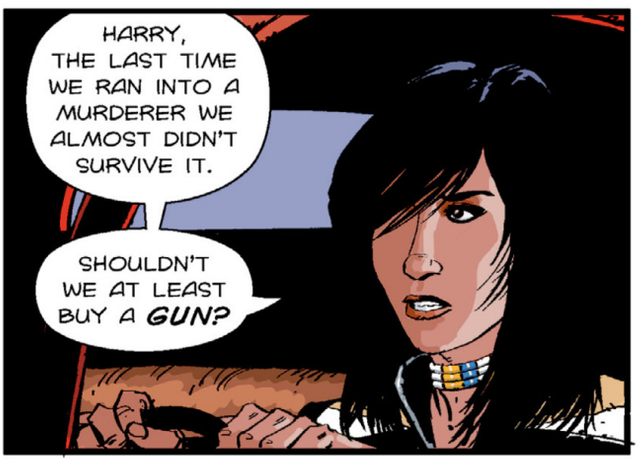
BUT... THAT'LL HAVE US CHASING THOUSANDS OF CRANK CALLS, SIR. WE'LL GET EVERY WEIRDO BIGFOOT HUNTER AND U.F.O. NUT IN THE BOOK.
WE MIGHT AS WELL JUST CALL OURSELVES THE X-FILES.

IT COULD BE WORSE THAN THAT, GENTLEMEN.
THIS COULD BE MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE.

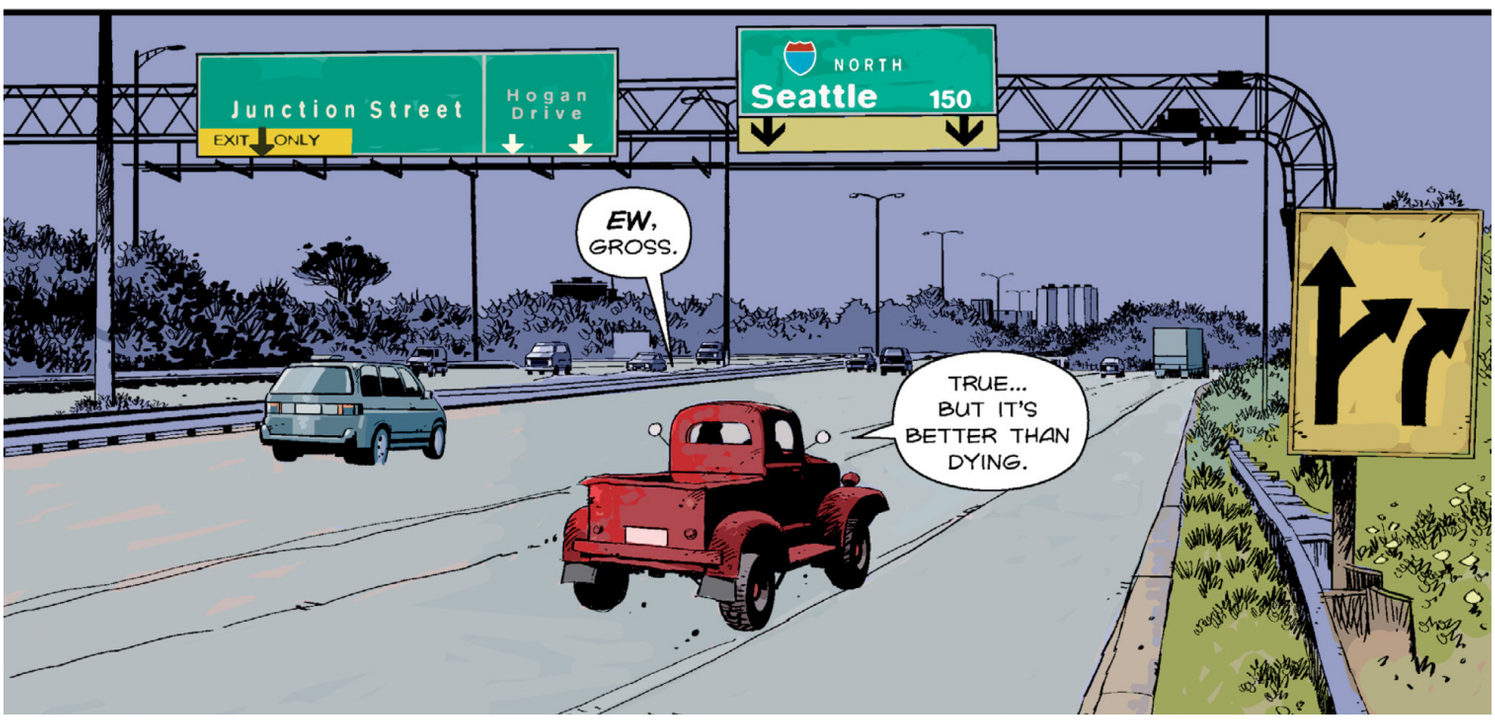

SO WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE GET THERE?
YOU GOT A PLAN?

TALK TO PEOPLE WHO KNEW THE VICTIM.
LEARN WHATEVER WE CAN.


BUT CLEARING BERT MEANS FINDING THE *REAL* KILLER, RIGHT?
I SUPPOSE SO.


HARRY, THE LAST TIME WE RAN INTO A MURDERER WE ALMOST DIDN'T SURVIVE IT.
SHOULDN'T WE AT LEAST BUY A *GUN?*

SO YOU CAN SHOOT ME AGAIN? I DON'T THINK SO.
ANYWAY, WE'RE DEALING WITH A POISONER THIS TIME. WE'D BE BETTER OFF BUYING A STOMACH PUMP.


Junction Street
EXIT ONLY
Hogan Drive
NORTH
Seattle 150
EW, GROSS.
TRUE... BUT IT'S BETTER THAN DYING.

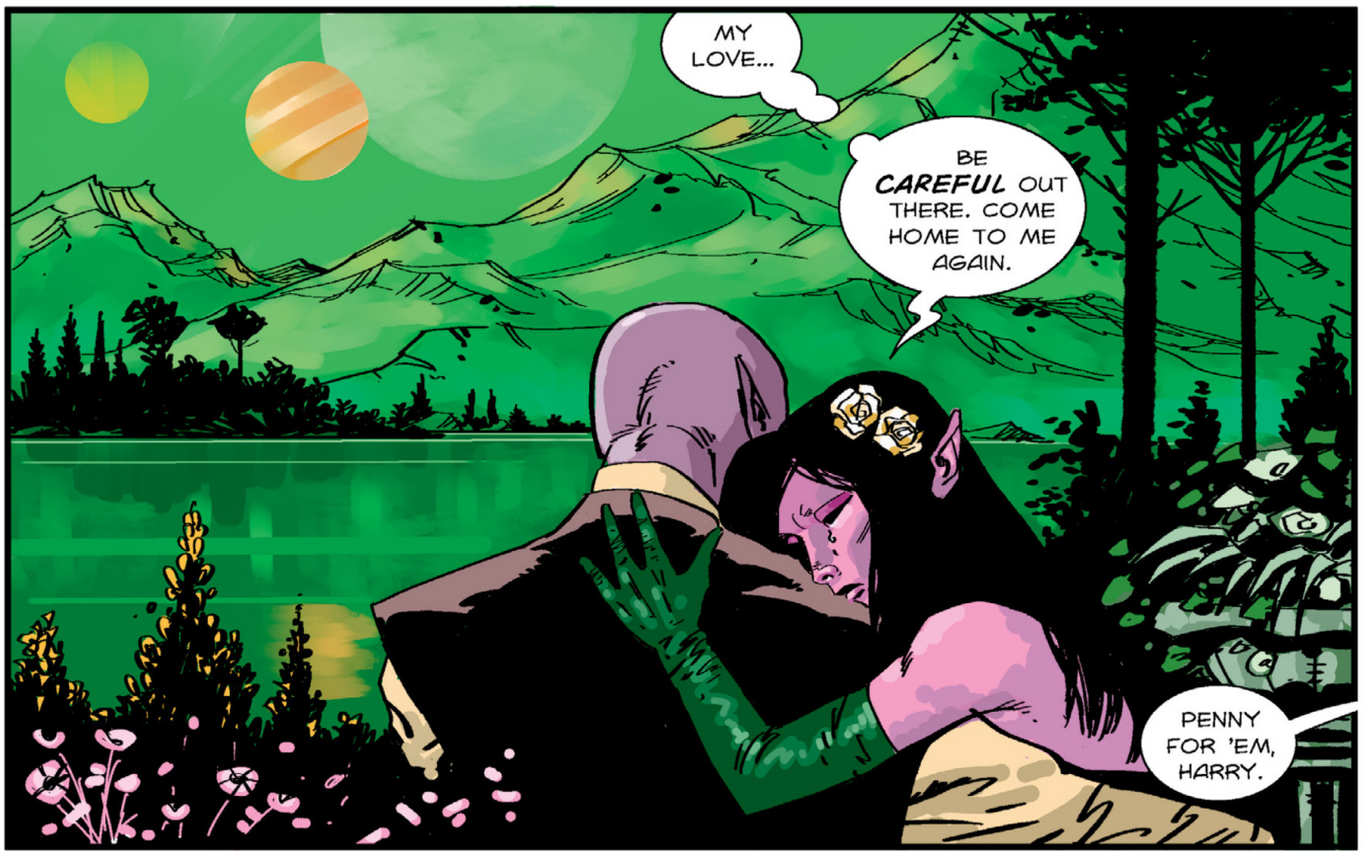
WHAT DO I THINK I'M GOING TO ACCOMPLISH HERE?

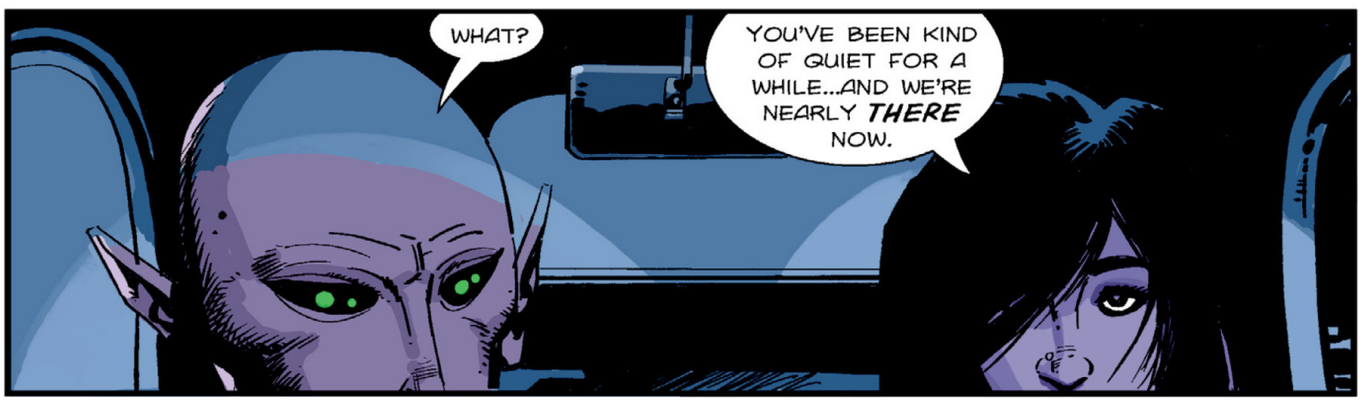
LET'S FACE IT. SO FAR I'VE BEEN A ***TERRIBLE*** DETECTIVE. I SUSPECT THE ONLY REASON BEN MAXWELL WAS CAUGHT WAS BECAUSE SUBCONSCIOUSLY HE ***WANTED*** TO BE.

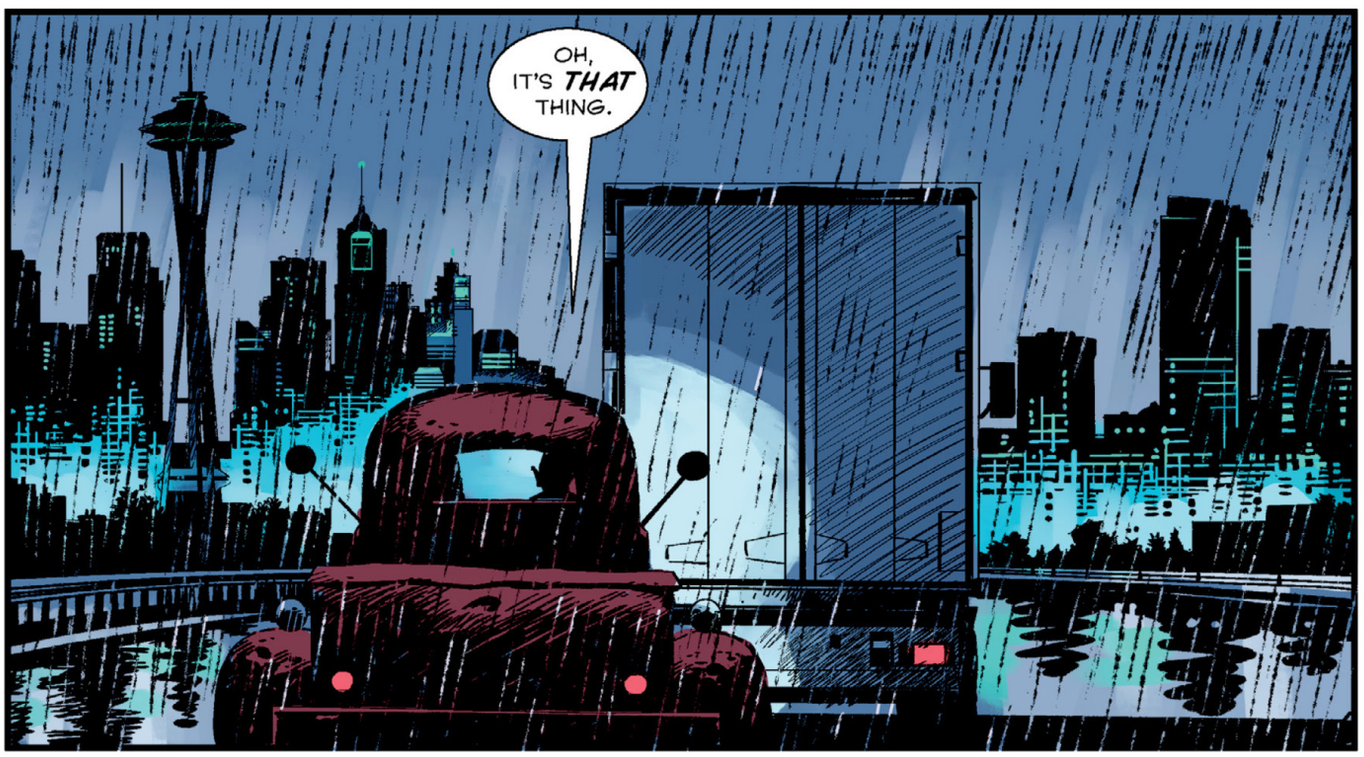
BUT WHY DIDN'T I ***SENSE*** SOMETHING THE FIRST TIME I MET HIM?

WAS IT BECAUSE HE WAS A PSYCHOPATH? BECAUSE HE FELT NO GUILT?

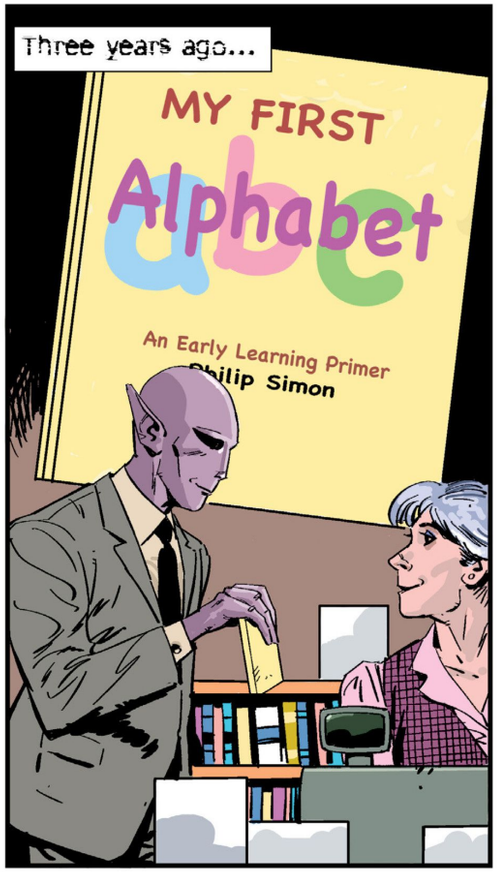
OR WAS IT BECAUSE HE DISTRACTED ME...

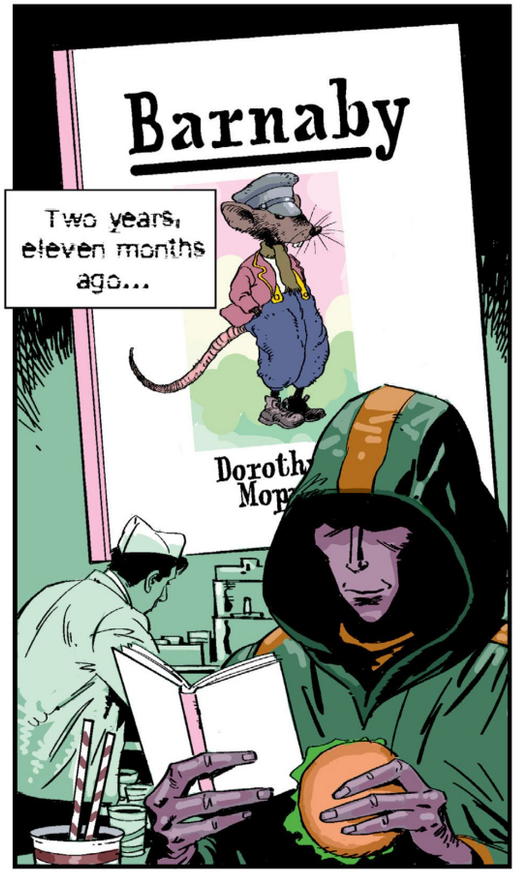

MY LOVE...
BE CAREFUL OUT THERE. COME HOME TO ME AGAIN.
PENNY FOR 'EM, HARRY.


WHAT?
YOU'VE BEEN KIND OF QUIET FOR A WHILE...AND WE'RE NEARLY THERE NOW.

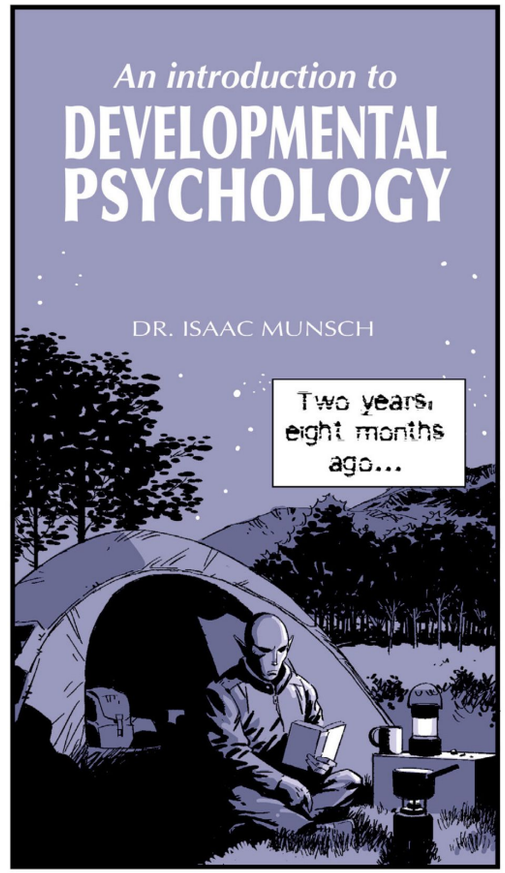

OH, IT'S THAT THING.

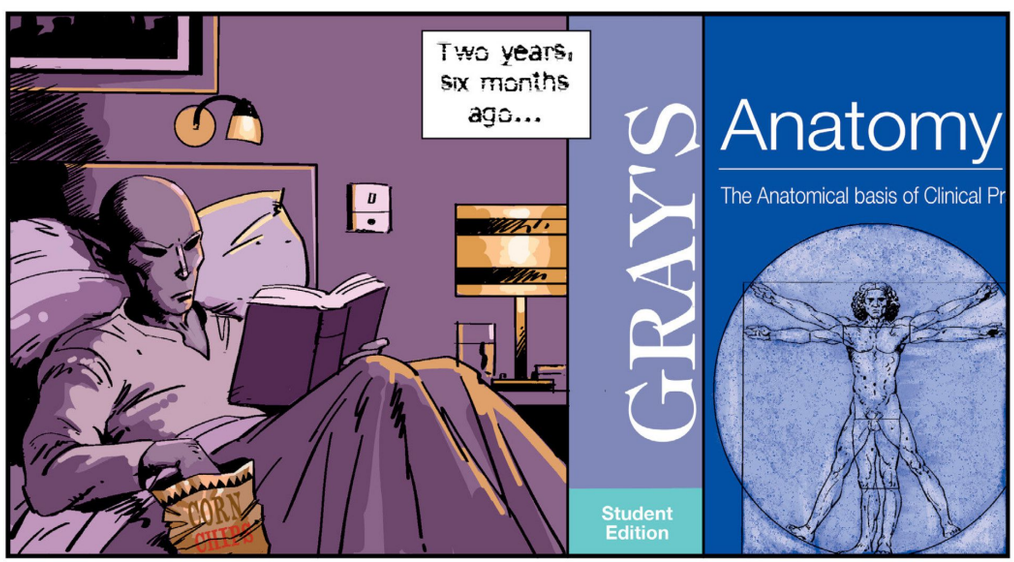
WHAT?
NOTHING.
JUST SOMETHING ETHAN SAID.
SO... WHAT KIND OF HOTEL ARE WE LOOKING FOR?
FIVE STARS WITH A POOL, OR THE GRUNGIEST FLOPHOUSE IN TOWN?
SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, I THINK...
LET'S SAY THREE STARS...AND IN A QUIET STREET.
SO MANY PEOPLE...IT'S LIKE A SEA OF EMOTIONS AND DESIRES...
HOW DO THEY STAND IT?
ARE THEY ALL SO SELFISH THEY'RE SIMPLY OBLIVIOUS TO THOSE AROUND THEM?
YOU GOING TO START QUESTIONING PEOPLE TODAY?
NO, IN THE MORNING.


Three years ago...
MY FIRST
Alphabet
An Early Learning Primer
Philip Simon


Barnaby
Two years, eleven months ago...

35¢
RAY BRADBURY
The MARTIAN CHRONICLES
Two years, ten months ago...
World famous stories of the first interplanetary conquest


An introduction to
DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
DR. ISAAC MUNSCH
Two years, eight months ago...


Two years, six months ago...
GRAY'S
Anatomy
The Anatomical basis of Clinical Pr
Student Edition

Two years ago...
A PHILIP MARLOWE MYSTERY
RAYMOND CHANDLER
THE BIG SLEEP

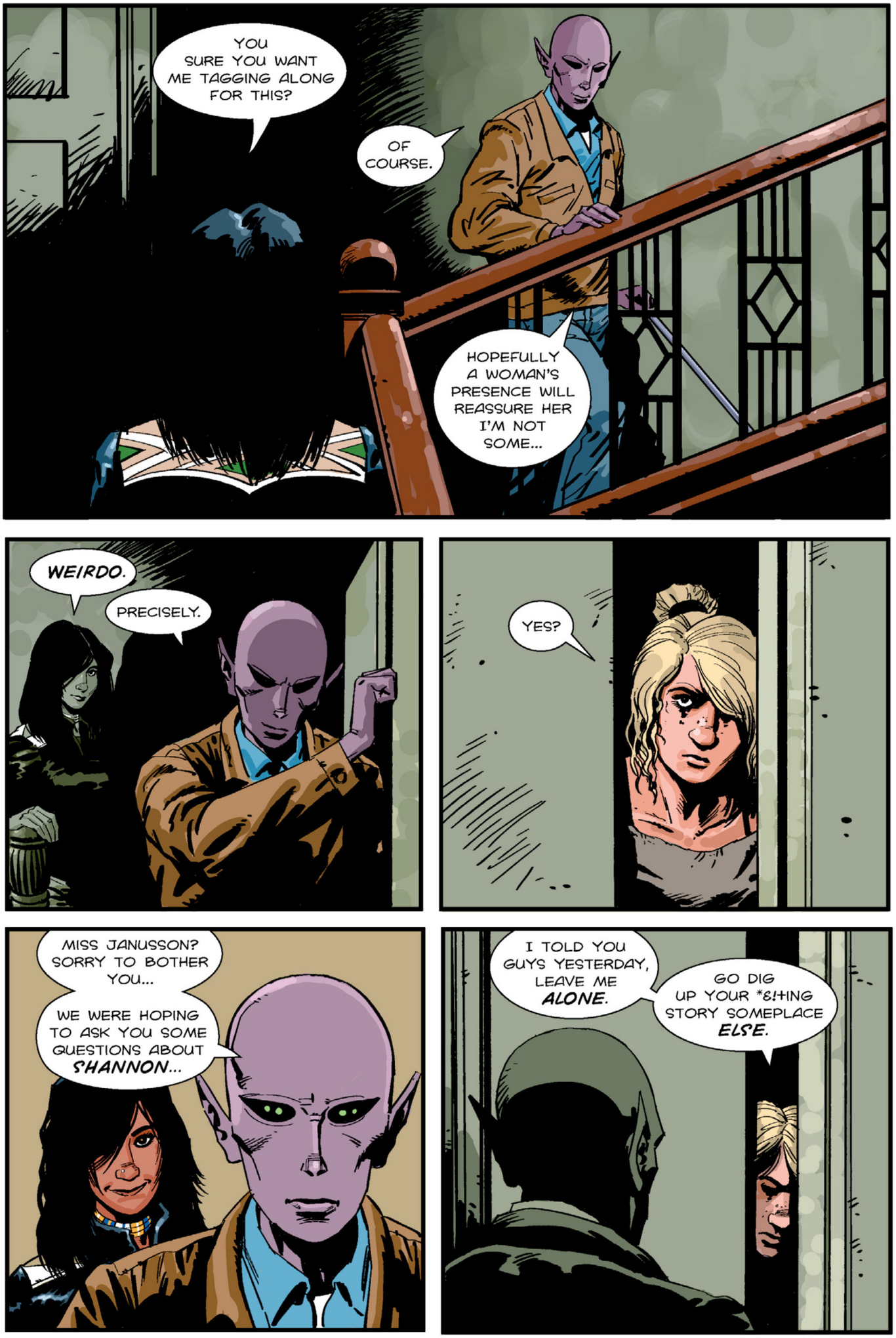
A Sam Hain Mystery
TRUE CRIME
THE PUSSYCAT WORE A TEDDY
Rex Monday
35¢
GEEZ, HARRY...
...WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU READING?
35¢
TRUE CRIME
A Sam Hain Mystery
Take the BUNNY and RUN
Rex Monday

THIS IS, LIKE, PREHISTORIC PORN.

THEY'RE THRILLERS. I FOUND THEM IN THE OFFICE THIS MORNING...
I ASSUME THEY BELONGED TO HODGES--
--AND I NEEDED SOMETHING TO READ. SO...

PROBABLY HIDING THEM FROM HIS WIFE.
YOU GOT A PLAN FOR TOMORROW?

MIKE SAID SHANNON HAD A ROOMMATE, SO WE'LL START WITH HER...
...THEN MOVE ON TO HER TEACHERS AND CLASSMATES.
GUESS I'D BETTER TURN IN, THEN...
GOOD NIGHT, HARRY--I'M JUST NEXT DOOR IF YOU NEED ME.
IF I NEED HER?
SHE COULDN'T MEAN...
NO.
OF COURSE NOT.


YOU SURE YOU WANT ME TAGGING ALONG FOR THIS?
OF COURSE.
HOPEFULLY A WOMAN'S PRESENCE WILL REASSURE HER I'M NOT SOME...
WEIRDO.
PRECISELY.
YES?
MISS JANUSSON? SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
WE WERE HOPING TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT SHANNON...
I TOLD YOU GUYS YESTERDAY, LEAVE ME ALONE.
GO DIG UP YOUR *&!+ING STORY SOMEPLACE ELSE.

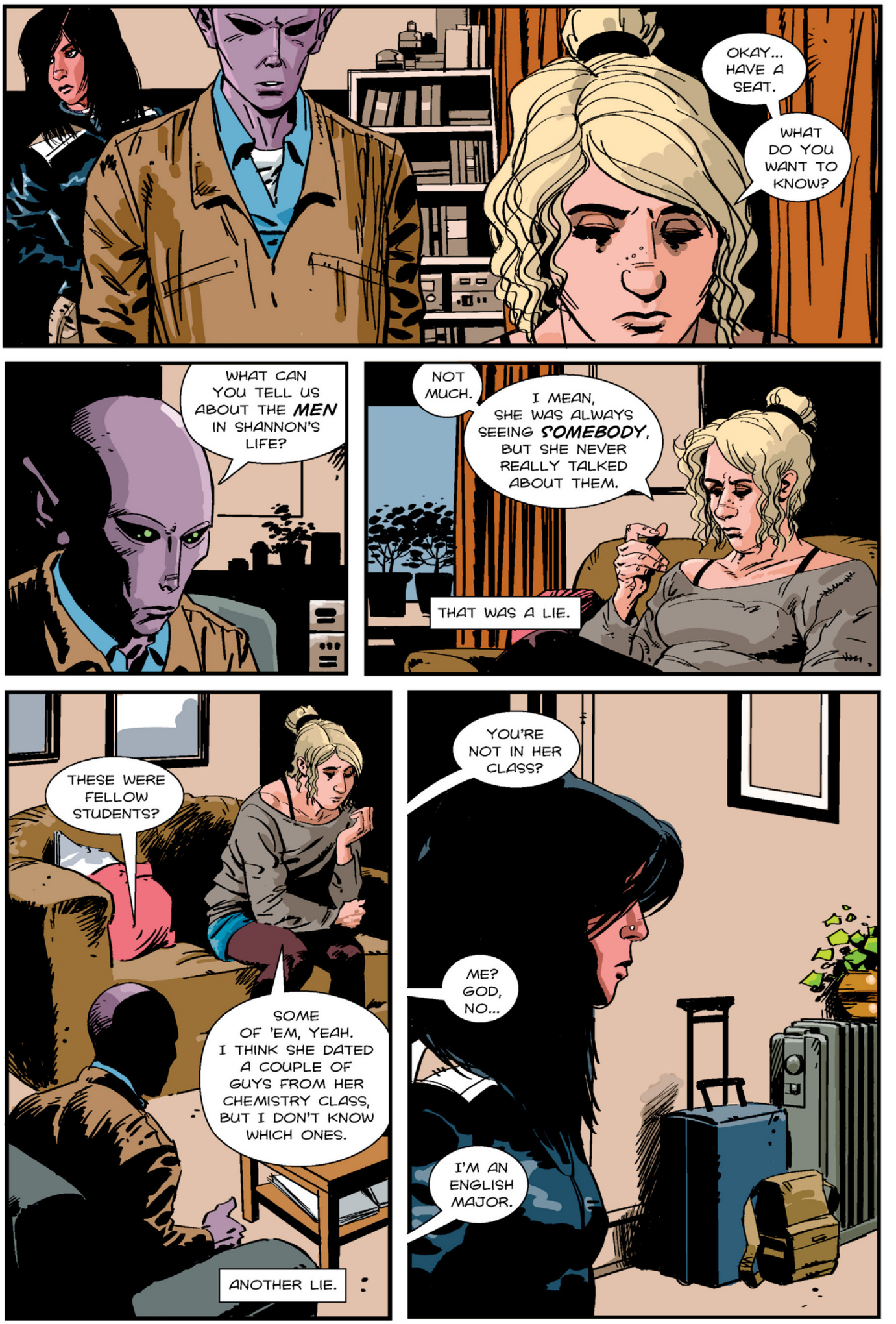
WE'RE NOT JOURNALISTS.
PLEASE, MISS JANUSSON... A MAN'S LIFE COULD DEPEND ON THIS.

CALL ME KAREN.
YOU BETTER COME IN.

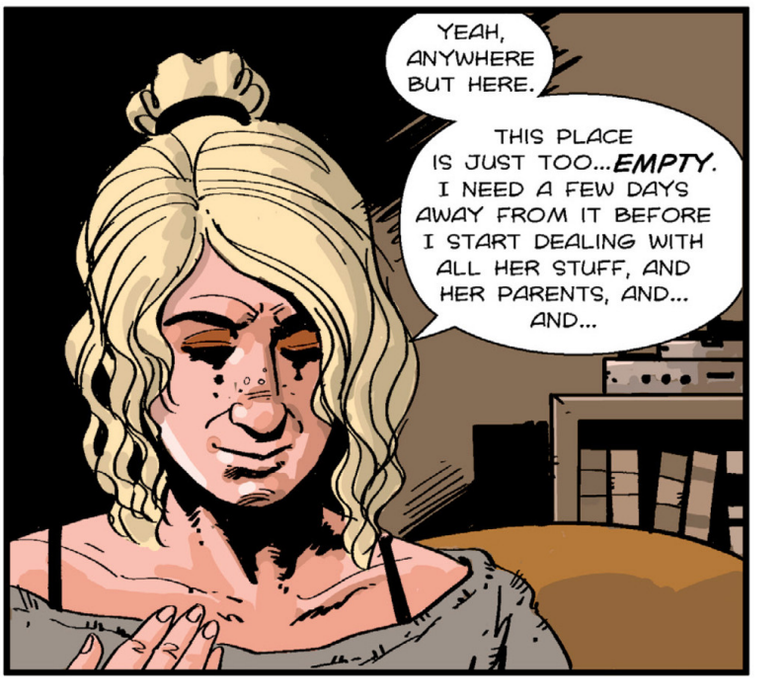
MY NAME IS VANDERSPEIGLE. I'M A DOCTOR, FROM PATIENCE...
THE TOWN WHERE SHANNON WAS--
YES.

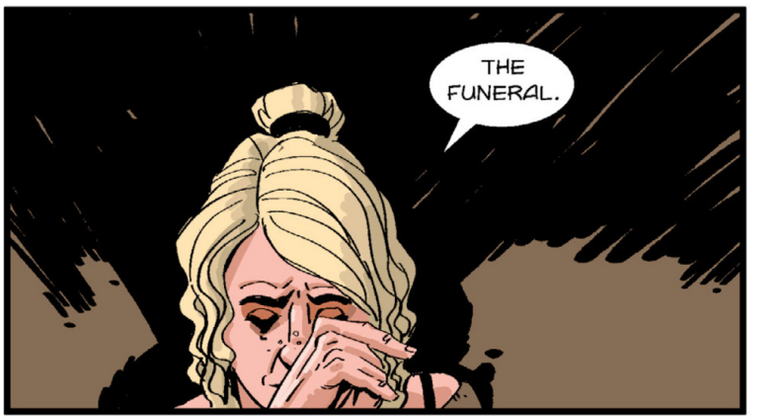
A FRIEND OF MINE IS SUSPECTED OF HER MURDER.
I'M CONVINCED HE'S INNOCENT, BUT I NEED TO FIND PROOF OF THAT.

AND WHO ARE YOU?
NAME'S ASTA. I'M HIS NURSE...I MEAN, I WORK WITH HIM.
AND HE'S ON THE LEVEL, REALLY...

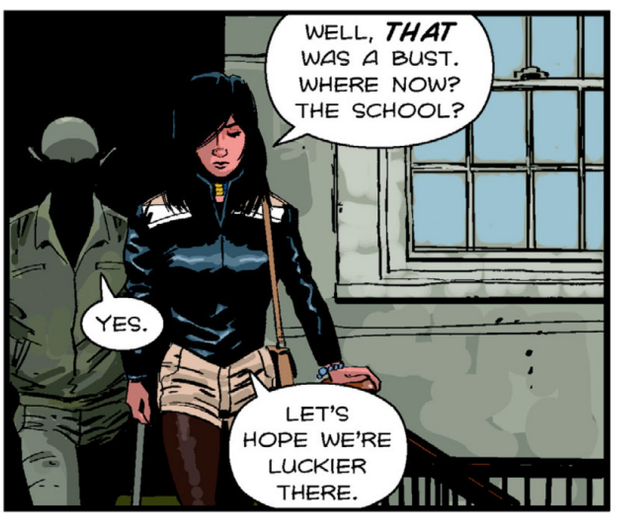

OKAY... HAVE A SEAT.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE MEN IN SHANNON'S LIFE?
NOT MUCH.
I MEAN, SHE WAS ALWAYS SEEING SOMEBODY, BUT SHE NEVER REALLY TALKED ABOUT THEM.
THAT WAS A LIE.
THESE WERE FELLOW STUDENTS?
SOME OF 'EM, YEAH. I THINK SHE DATED A COUPLE OF GUYS FROM HER CHEMISTRY CLASS, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHICH ONES.
ANOTHER LIE.
YOU'RE NOT IN HER CLASS?
ME? GOD, NO...
I'M AN ENGLISH MAJOR.

SEE YOU'RE PACKING...
YOU GOING SOMEWHERE?


YEAH, ANYWHERE BUT HERE.
THIS PLACE IS JUST TOO...EMPTY. I NEED A FEW DAYS AWAY FROM IT BEFORE I START DEALING WITH ALL HER STUFF, AND HER PARENTS, AND... AND...


THE FUNERAL.

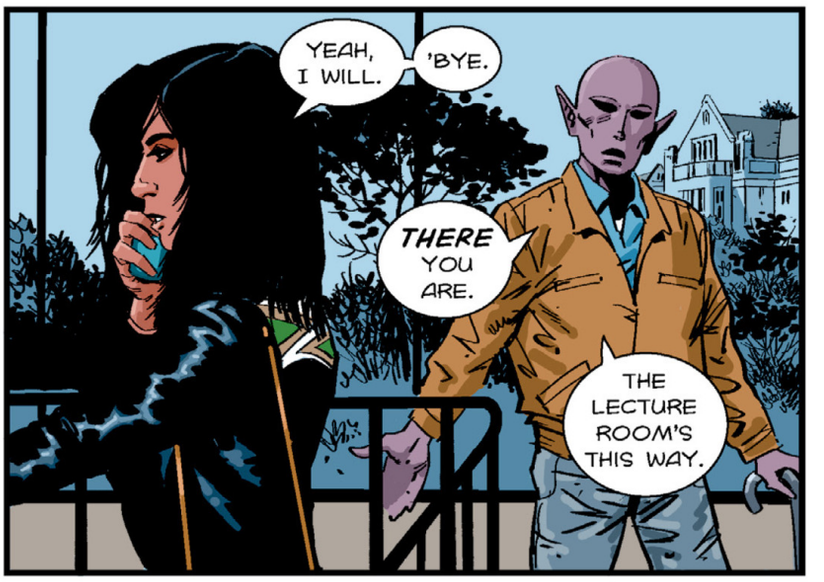
I'M SORRY.
WE WON'T INTRUDE UPON YOUR GRIEF ANY LONGER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME--YOU'VE BEEN MOST HELPFUL.

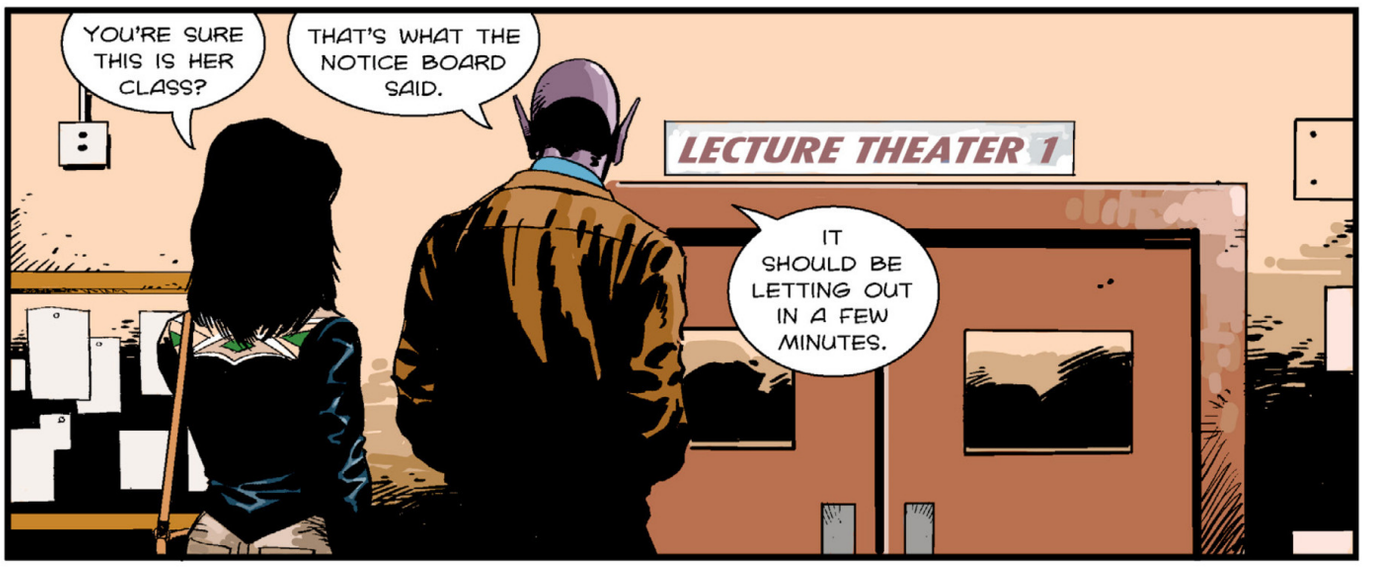

WELL, THAT WAS A BUST. WHERE NOW? THE SCHOOL?
YES.
LET'S HOPE WE'RE LUCKIER THERE.

THE GRIEF WAS GENUINE...
BUT WHY WAS SHE LYING? IS SHE PROTECTING SOMEONE?

DAD? IT'S ME... I'M IN SEATTLE...
WITH HIM.

YEAH, I KNOW, BUT...
WELL, I COULDN'T STOP HIM, SO I FIGURED I SHOULD GO ALONG FOR THE RIDE.


YEAH, I WILL.
'BYE.
THERE YOU ARE.
THE LECTURE ROOM'S THIS WAY.


YOU'RE SURE THIS IS HER CLASS?
THAT'S WHAT THE NOTICE BOARD SAID.
LECTURE THEATER 1
IT SHOULD BE LETTING OUT IN A FEW MINUTES.

THEN WHAT?
THEN I, um...FOLLOW MY, er... INTUITION.
SEE WHO LOOKS LIKE THEY MIGHT BE UPSET.

IT'S NOT MUCH OF A PLAN, HARRY.
WELL, IT'S ALL I'VE GOT...
HERE THEY COME.
ECTURE THEATER 1
LECTURE THEATER 1
VISIBLY UPSET AND NERVOUS.
THAT ONE...
DISTRACTED AND BROODING.
AND THE ATHLETIC-LOOKING ONE...
I'LL FOLLOW THE SKINNY ONE...
WHILE I GRAB THE HUNK, GOTCHA.
TELL HIM I WANT TO TALK TO HIM, AND BRING HIM TO THE CANTEEN.

HEY! BIG GUY!
WAIT UP.

THE HELL?

OKAY, OKAY, LISTEN, LISTEN...
I DON'T HAVE IT, HONEST.
BUT I'LL GET IT TO YOU NEXT MONTH, I SWEAR.

WHAT THE *%#@! ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

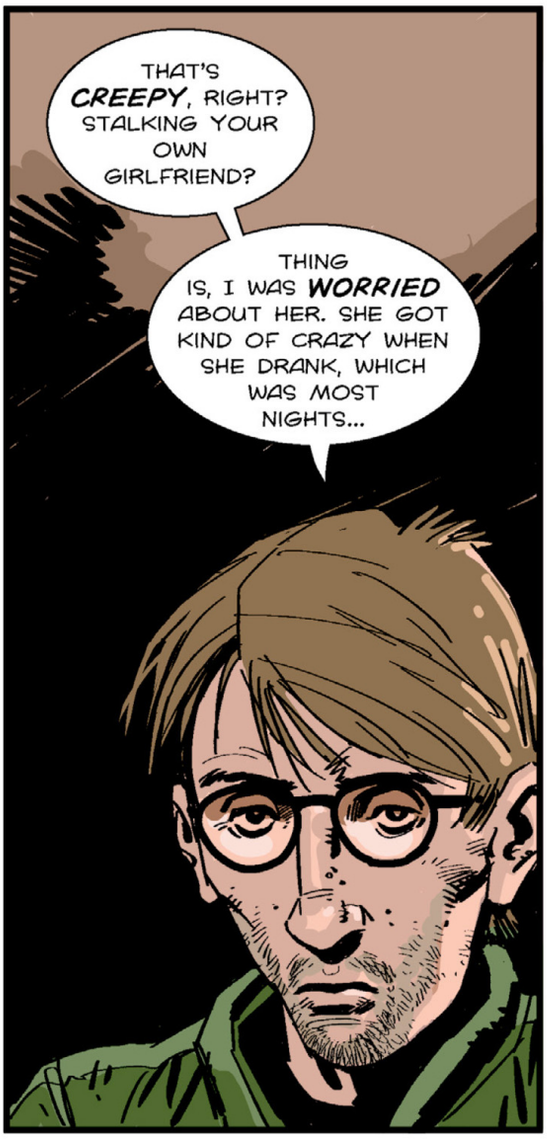
YOU'RE NOT FROM THEM?
OH.

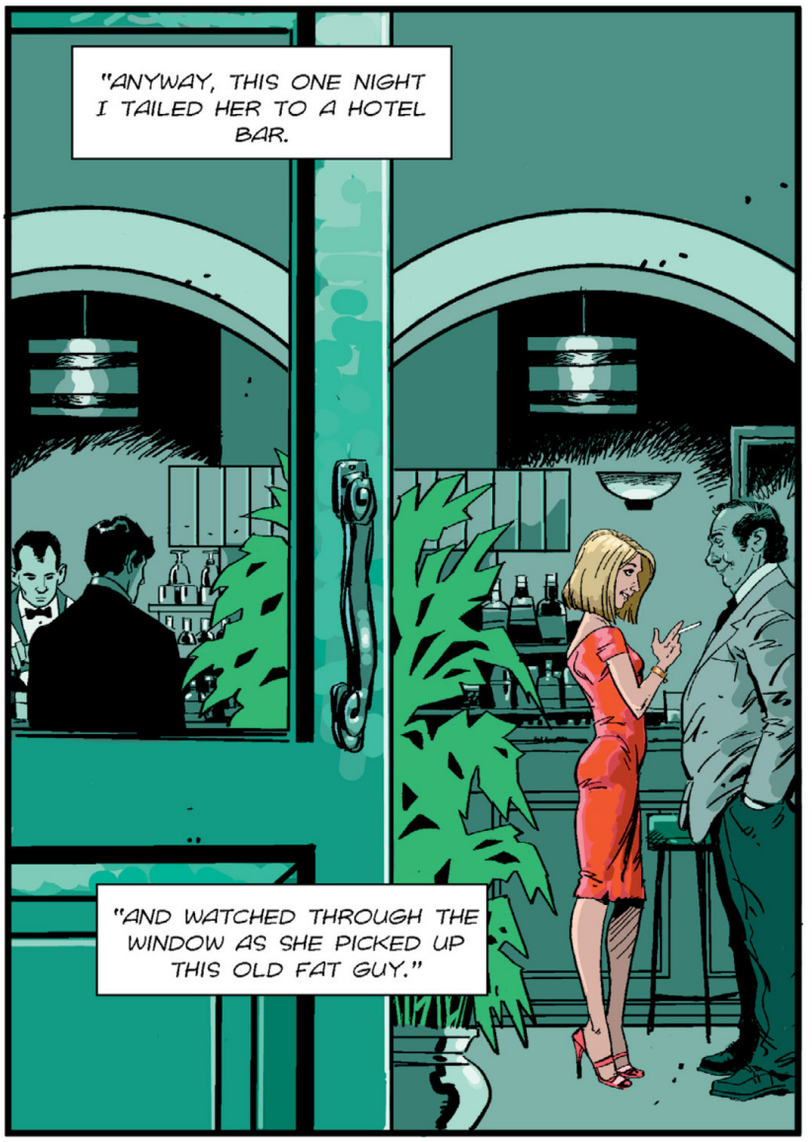
SEE, I, er, OWE SOME MONEY TO A CASINO...
WHICH IS OWNED BY, um, YOUR PEOPLE. THAT'S WHY I RAN.

YEAH? WELL, MAYBE I'LL JUST CALL MY ..."PEOPLE"...
UNLESS...

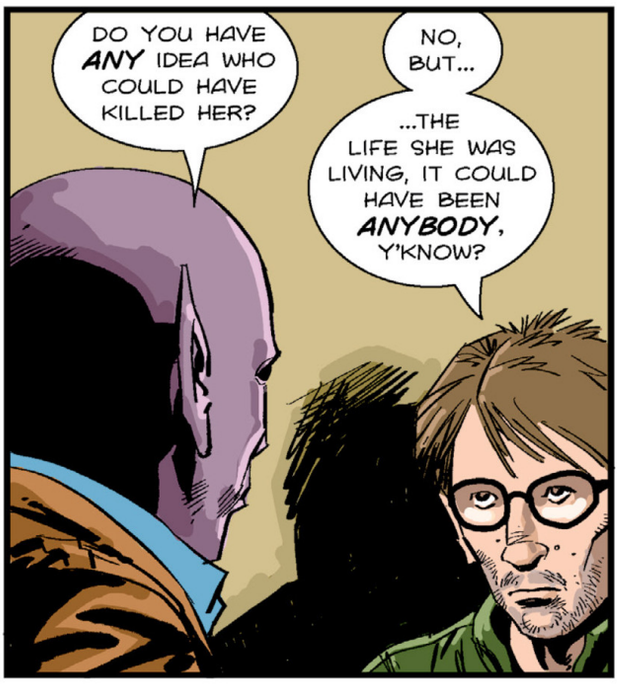
SO YOU WERE ACTUALLY SHANNON'S BOYFRIEND?
FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS, YEAH...
AND I THOUGHT WE WERE GETTING SERIOUS, BUT...
SHE THOUGHT OTHERWISE?

YEAH.
HALF THE TIME I NEVER EVEN KNEW WHERE SHE WAS...AND SHE'D NEVER TELL ME, SO...ONE NIGHT I FOLLOWED HER.


THAT'S CREEPY, RIGHT? STALKING YOUR OWN GIRLFRIEND?
THING IS, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HER. SHE GOT KIND OF CRAZY WHEN SHE DRANK, WHICH WAS MOST NIGHTS...


"ANYWAY, THIS ONE NIGHT I TAILED HER TO A HOTEL BAR.
"AND WATCHED THROUGH THE WINDOW AS SHE PICKED UP THIS OLD FAT GUY."

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE JUST MARCHED IN THERE AND BUSTED THINGS UP, BUT...
SEEING IT KIND OF... KNOCKED THE STUFFING OUT OF ME.
WHEN I FINALLY CALLED HER ON IT, SHE SAID IT WAS NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
SAID SHE DID IT ALL THE TIME. SAID THE GUYS GAVE HER GIFTS, AND THAT'S HOW SHE PAID HER TUITION.
SO SHE WAS--
A HOOKER, YEAH, BASICALLY...
I COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT, SO I WALKED AWAY.
SHE WAS MESSED UP, Y'KNOW?
I MEAN, SHE KEPT COMPARING THESE OLD GUYS TO HER DAD... IT WAS WEIRD AND SICK AND...
I DUNNO. I THOUGHT I WAS OVER HER, BUT...I'VE BEEN CRYING EVER SINCE I HEARD SHE WAS... GONE.
GUESS YOU CAN'T HELP WHO YOU LOVE, CAN YOU?
NO.

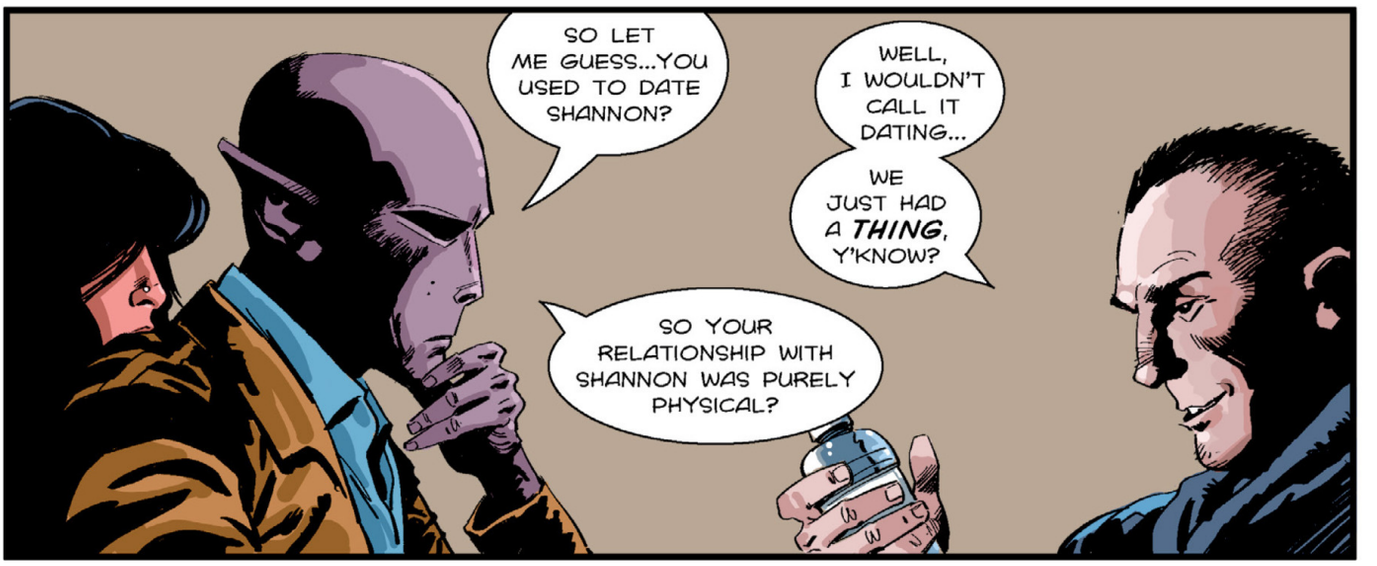

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO COULD HAVE KILLED HER?
NO, BUT...
...THE LIFE SHE WAS LIVING, IT COULD HAVE BEEN ANYBODY, Y'KNOW?

BUT I HOPE YOU CATCH THE GUY, I REALLY DO.
THANK YOU, JAKE. YOU'VE BEEN MOST HELPFUL.

HARRY, THIS IS DOUG.
HE'S WILLING TO TALK, BUT--
SHE SAID YOU'D GIVE ME FIFTY BUCKS.

SHE DID, DID SHE?
SORRY, HARRY. ONLY WAY I COULD GET HIM HERE.

VERY WELL.
I'LL GIVE YOU FIFTY DOLLARS, DOUG... IF YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING USEFUL.


SO LET ME GUESS...YOU USED TO DATE SHANNON?
WELL, I WOULDN'T CALL IT DATING...
WE JUST HAD A THING, Y'KNOW?
SO YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SHANNON WAS PURELY PHYSICAL?

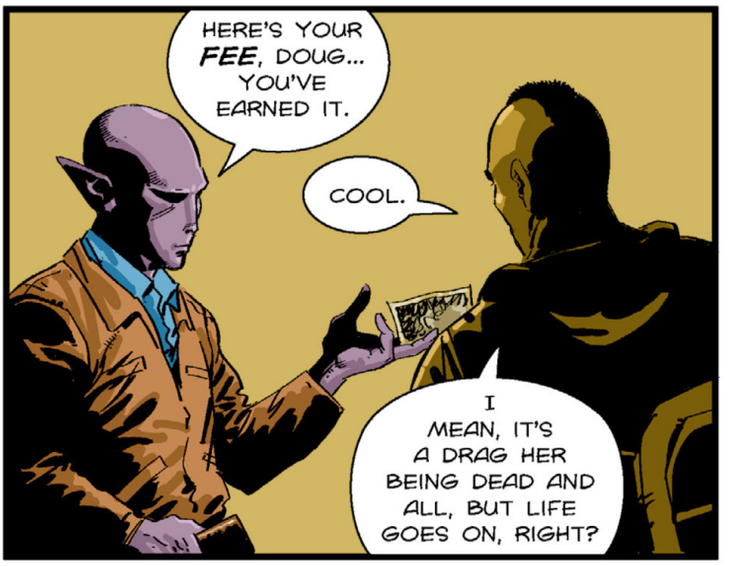
YEAH. I MEAN, SHANNON WAS WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL TRISEXUAL.
IF IT WAS SEXUAL, SHE'D TRY IT...WHICH WAS FINE WITH ME.

"LAST TIME I...SAW HER WAS A COUPLE OF MONTHS BACK...
"SHE JUST TURNED UP AT MY DOOR AND INSISTED ON US DOING A THREE-WAY WITH SOME DYKE CHICK SHE'D BROUGHT ALONG..."

TELL ME...
DID YOU USE PROTECTION ON THAT OCCASION?

ME? NO WAY, I HATE THE THINGS.
ANYWAY, I NEVER HEARD FROM HER AFTER THAT. TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I THINK SHE WAS MORE INTERESTED IN THE OTHER CHICK THAN ME.

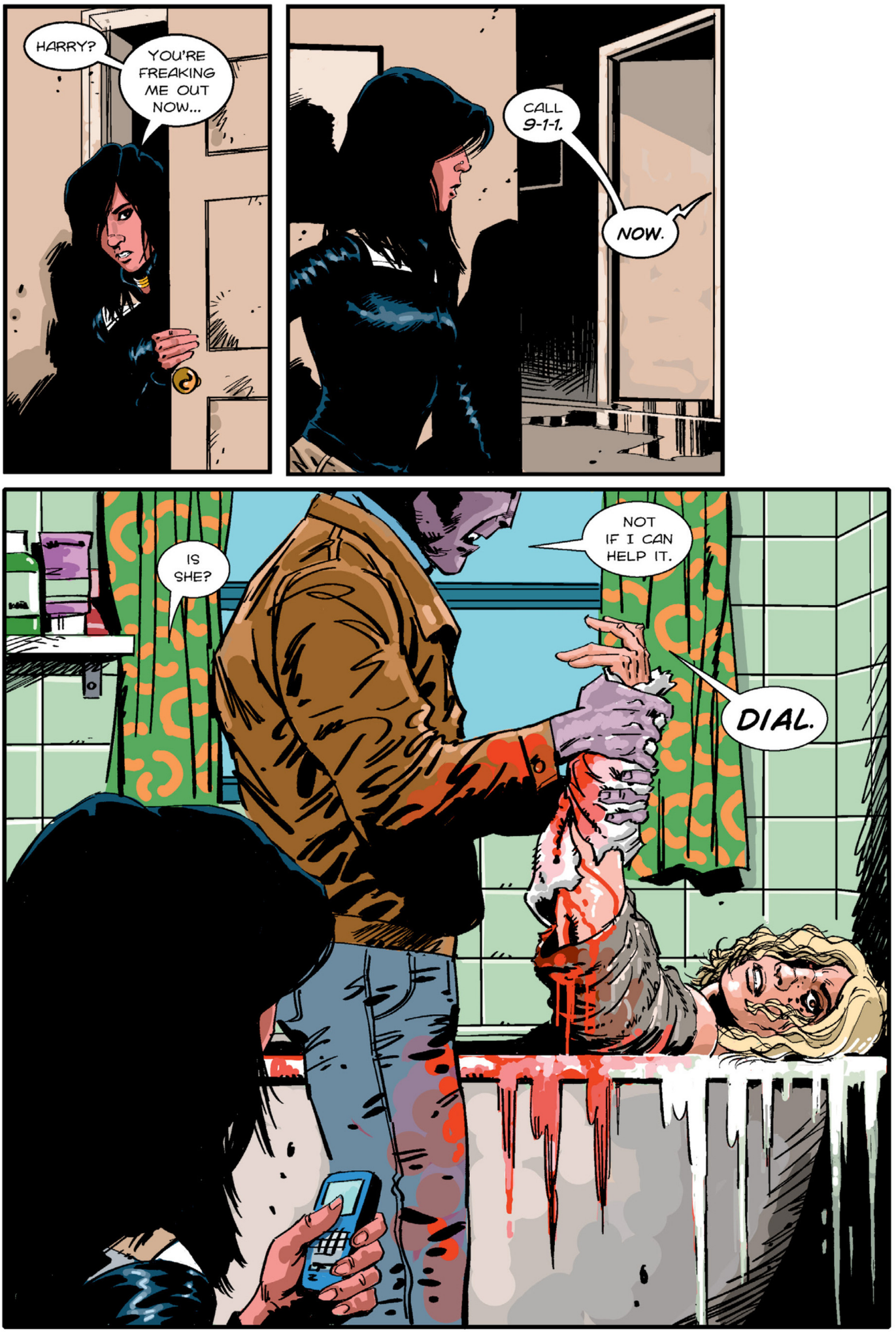
AH.
I SEE.


HERE'S YOUR FEE, DOUG... YOU'VE EARNED IT.
COOL.
I MEAN, IT'S A DRAG HER BEING DEAD AND ALL, BUT LIFE GOES ON, RIGHT?

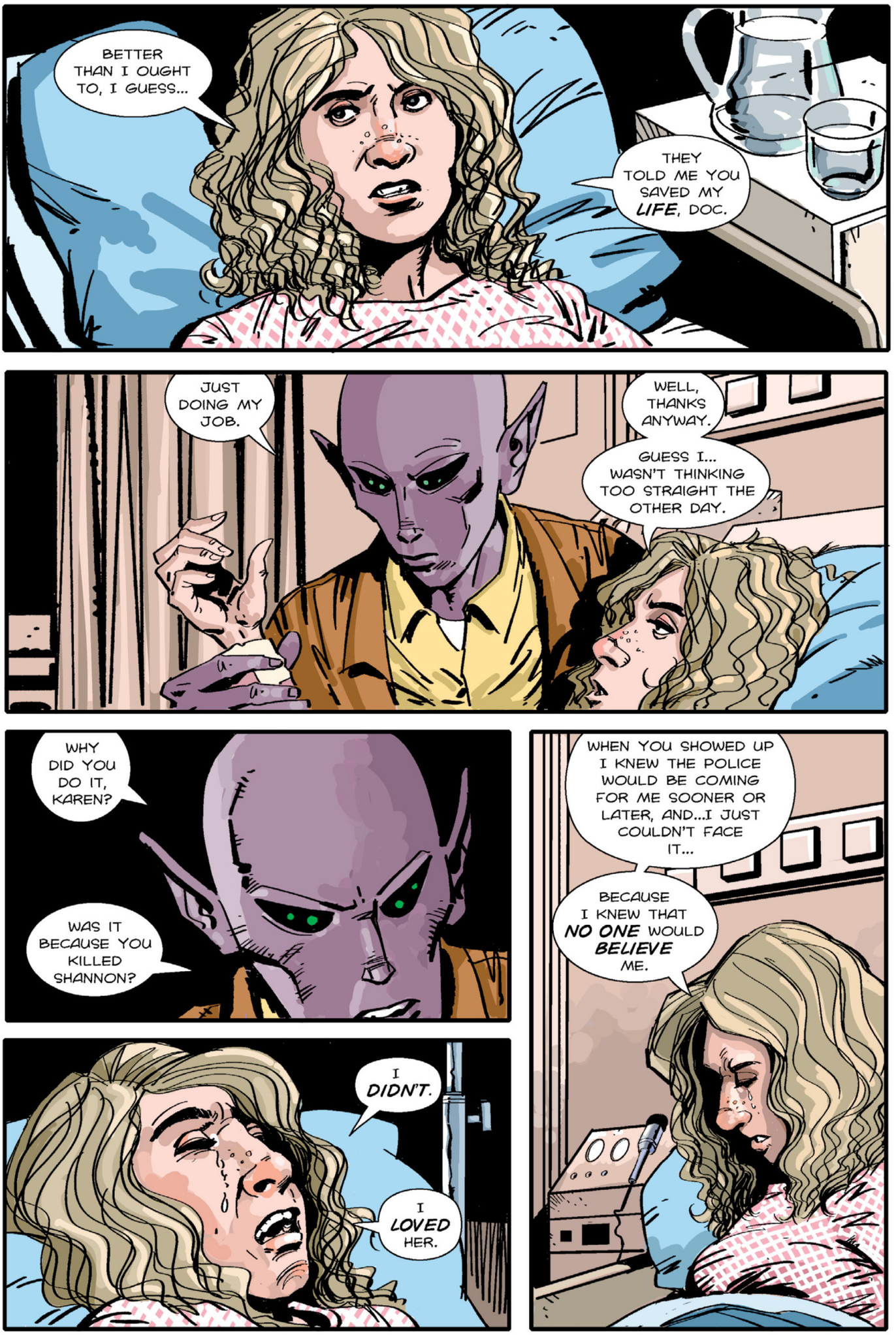
WELL, HE WAS A REAL CHARMER.
WHAT A JERK.
LET'S GO.

WE'RE DONE HERE?
YES, WE ARE.
I WANT TO TALK TO KAREN JANUSSON AGAIN.

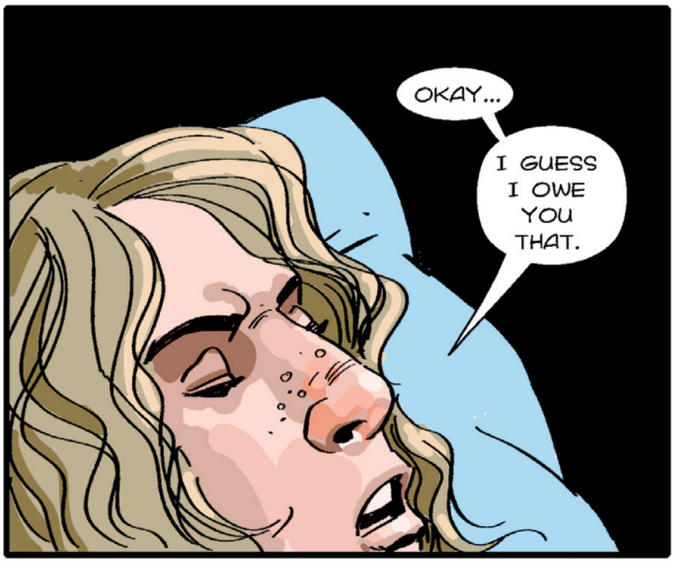
HARRY, SHE WON'T BE HERE.
SHE WAS GOING AWAY...
WELL, WE HAVE TO TRY.
DOOR'S OPEN.
HARRY, WE CAN'T JUST BUST IN...
WHO'S BUSTING? THE DOOR WAS OPEN.
MISS JANUSSON?
NO SIGN OF HER.
BUT HER BAG'S STILL HERE...
HARRY?

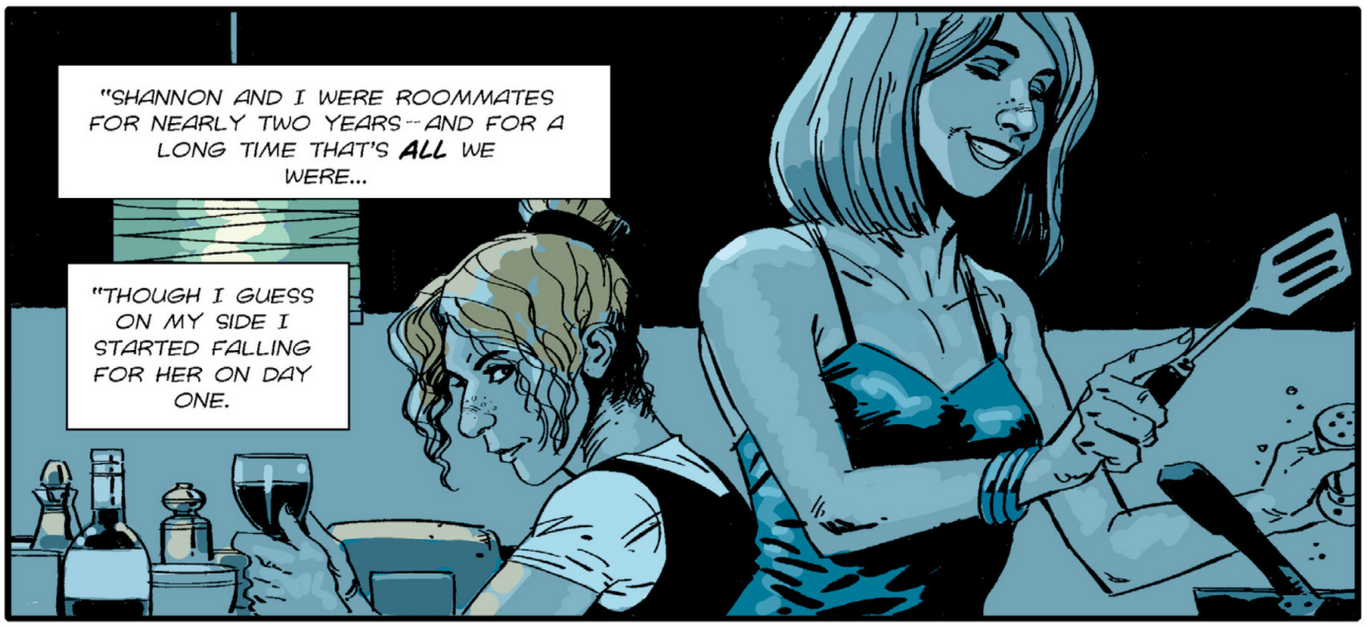

HARRY?
YOU'RE FREAKING ME OUT NOW...
CALL 9-1-1.
NOW.
IS SHE?
NOT IF I CAN HELP IT.
DIAL.

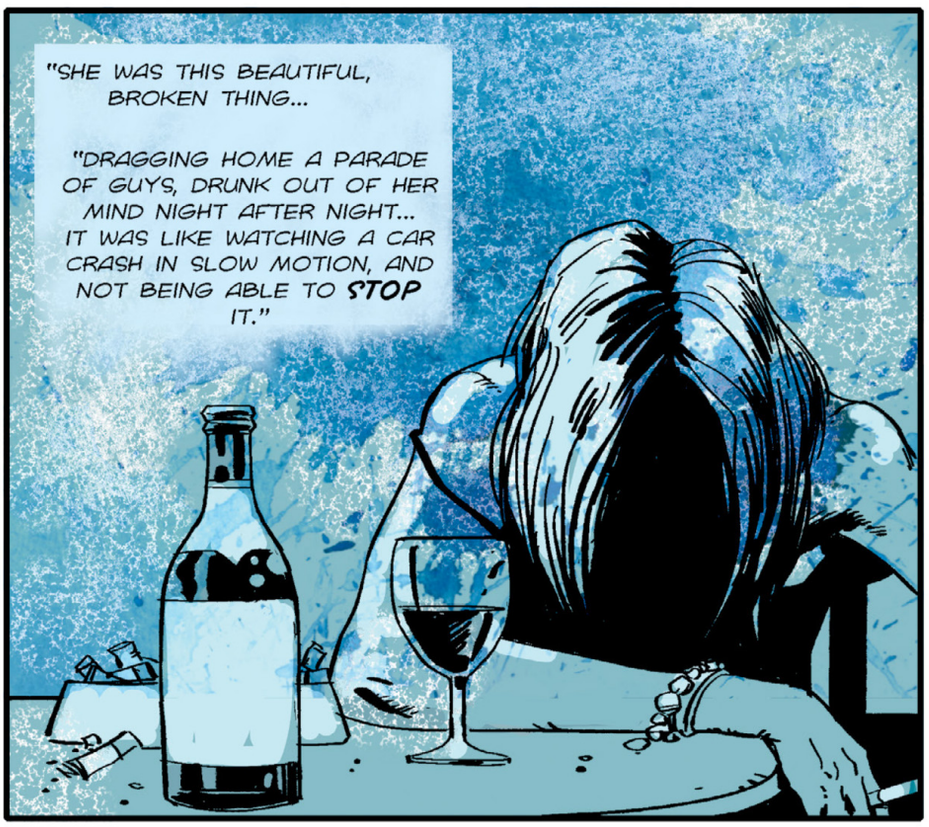
Two days later...
HEY, DOC...
HOW'S MY PATIENT TODAY?
STABLE.
AND EATING AGAIN. HUNGRY AS A HORSE, IN FACT...
AND ASKING FOR YOU.
I'M ON MY WAY.
HI...
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

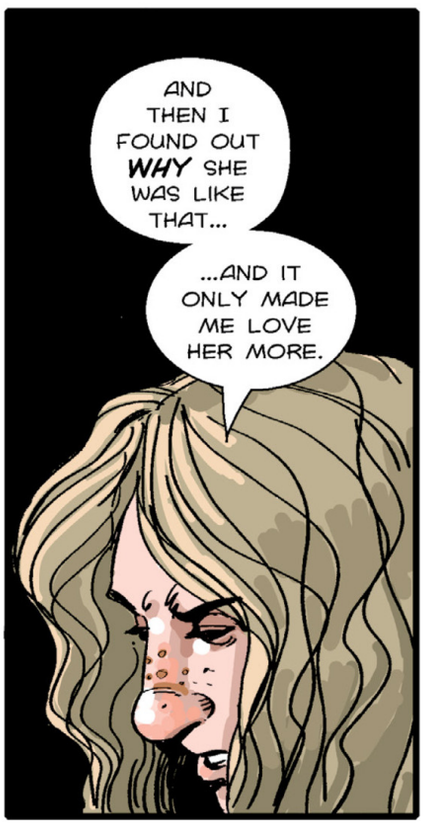

BETTER THAN I OUGHT TO, I GUESS...
THEY TOLD ME YOU SAVED MY LIFE, DOC.
JUST DOING MY JOB.
WELL, THANKS ANYWAY.
GUESS I... WASN'T THINKING TOO STRAIGHT THE OTHER DAY.
WHY DID YOU DO IT, KAREN?
WAS IT BECAUSE YOU KILLED SHANNON?
I DIDN'T.
I LOVED HER.
WHEN YOU SHOWED UP I KNEW THE POLICE WOULD BE COMING FOR ME SOONER OR LATER, AND...I JUST COULDN'T FACE IT...
BECAUSE I KNEW THAT NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE ME.

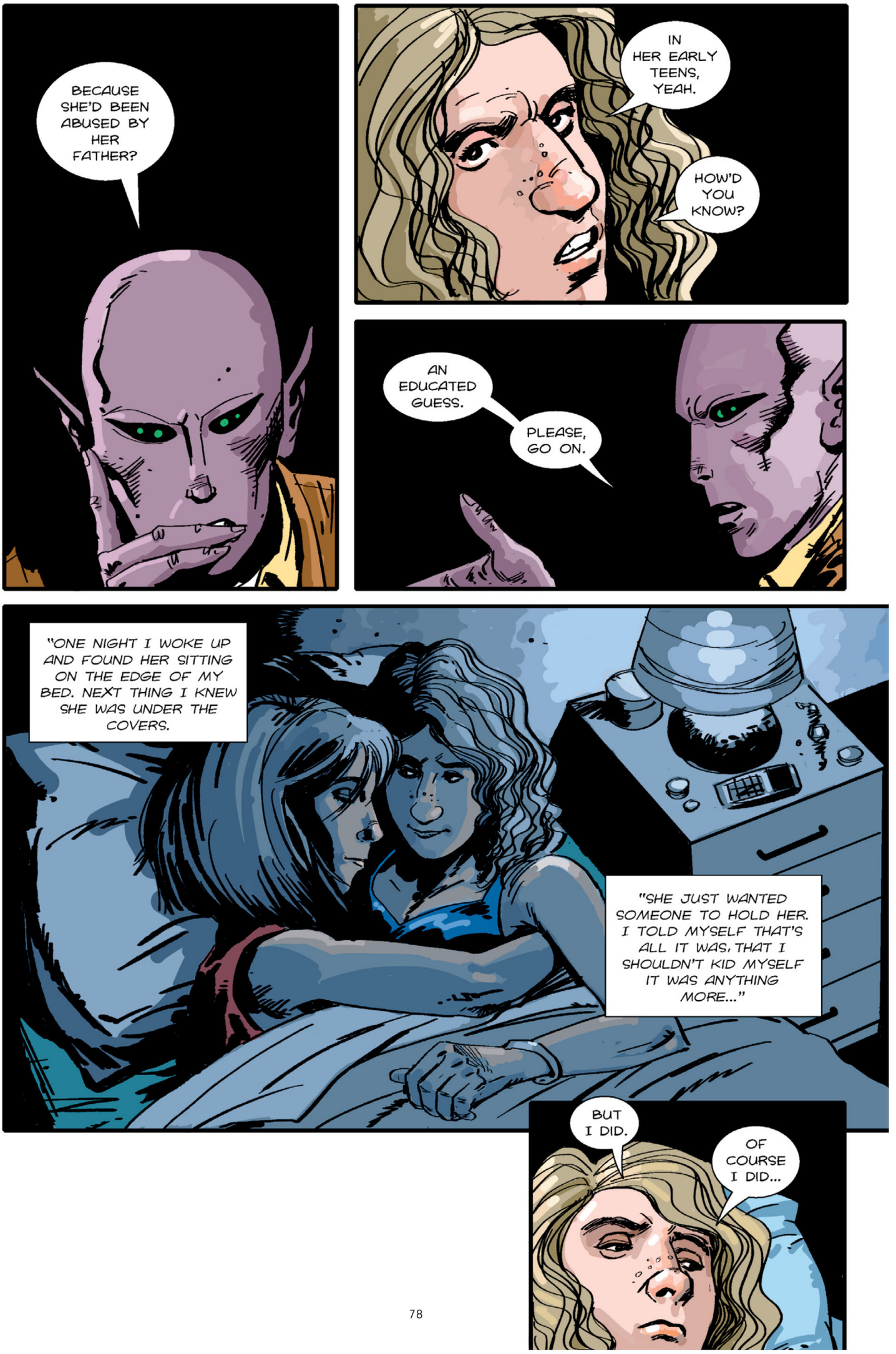
TRY ME.

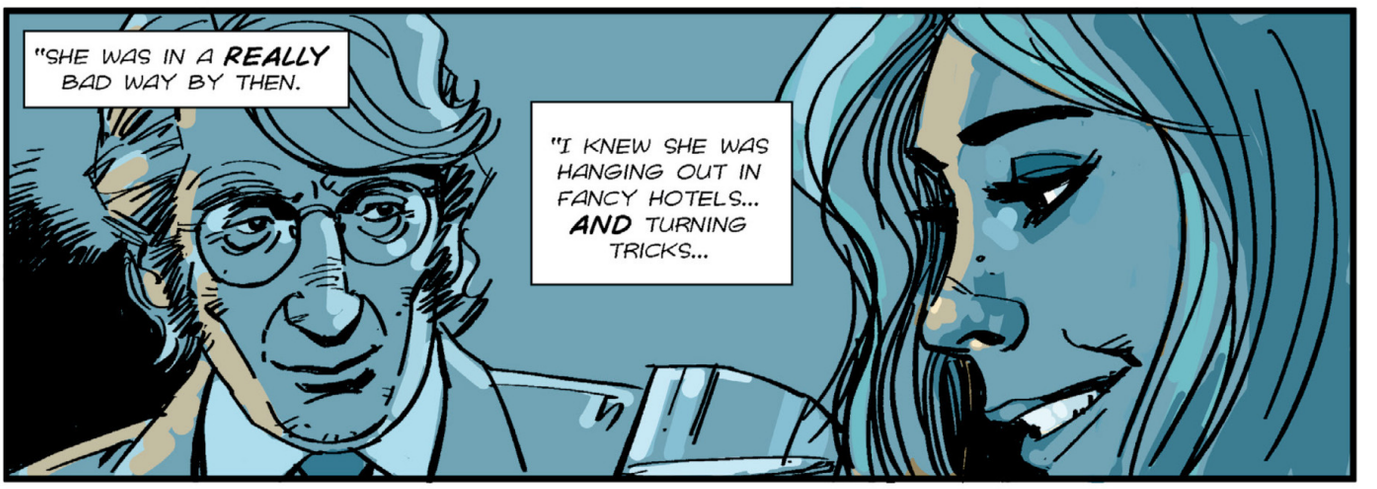

OKAY...
I GUESS I OWE YOU THAT.

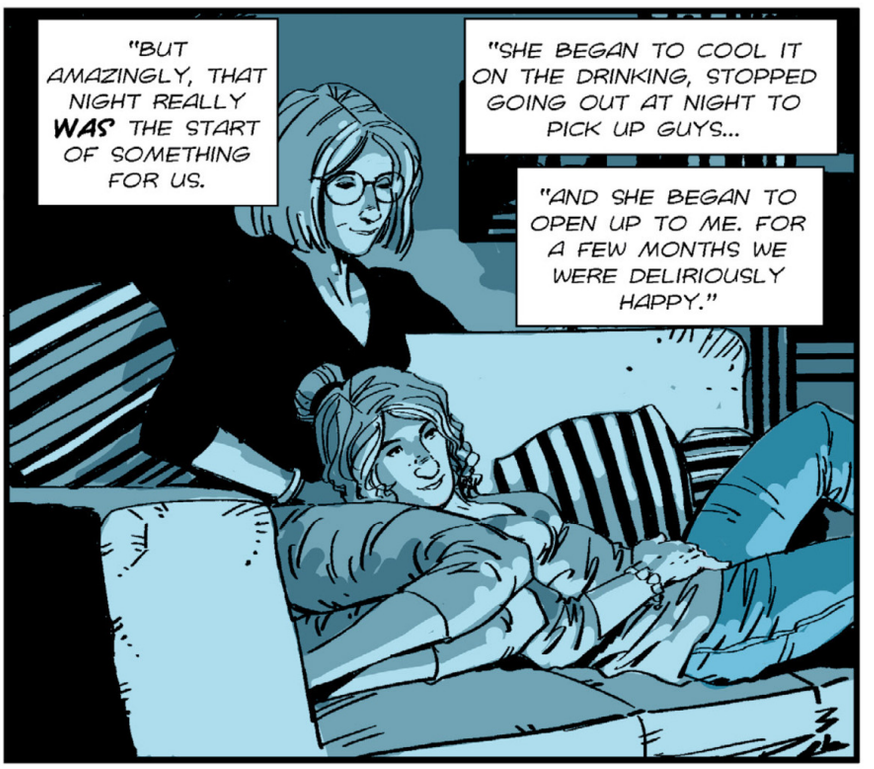

"SHANNON AND I WERE ROOMMATES FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS--AND FOR A LONG TIME THAT'S **ALL** WE WERE...
"THOUGH I GUESS ON MY SIDE I STARTED FALLING FOR HER ON DAY ONE.


"SHE WAS THIS BEAUTIFUL, BROKEN THING...
"DRAGGING HOME A PARADE OF GUYS, DRUNK OUT OF HER MIND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT... IT WAS LIKE WATCHING A CAR CRASH IN SLOW MOTION, AND NOT BEING ABLE TO **STOP** IT."

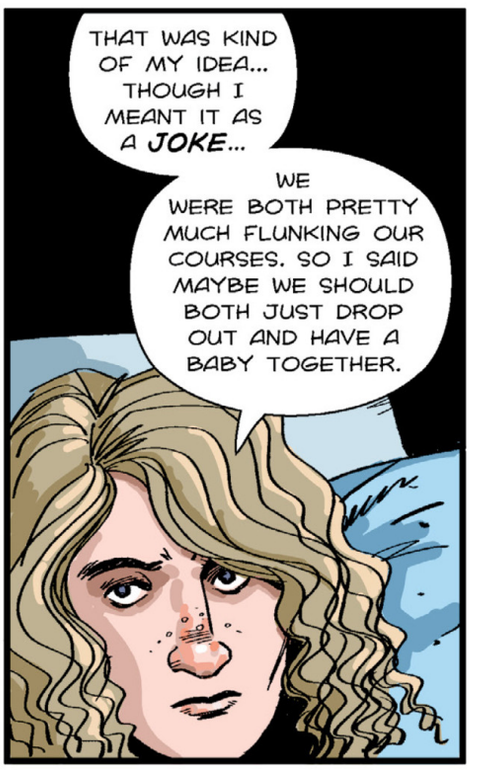

AND THEN I FOUND OUT **WHY** SHE WAS LIKE THAT...
...AND IT ONLY MADE ME LOVE HER MORE.


BECAUSE SHE'D BEEN ABUSED BY HER FATHER?
IN HER EARLY TEENS, YEAH.
HOW'D YOU KNOW?
AN EDUCATED GUESS.
PLEASE, GO ON.
"ONE NIGHT I WOKE UP AND FOUND HER SITTING ON THE EDGE OF MY BED. NEXT THING I KNEW SHE WAS UNDER THE COVERS.
"SHE JUST WANTED SOMEONE TO HOLD HER. I TOLD MYSELF THAT'S ALL IT WAS, THAT I SHOULDN'T KID MYSELF IT WAS ANYTHING MORE..."
BUT I DID.
OF COURSE I DID...

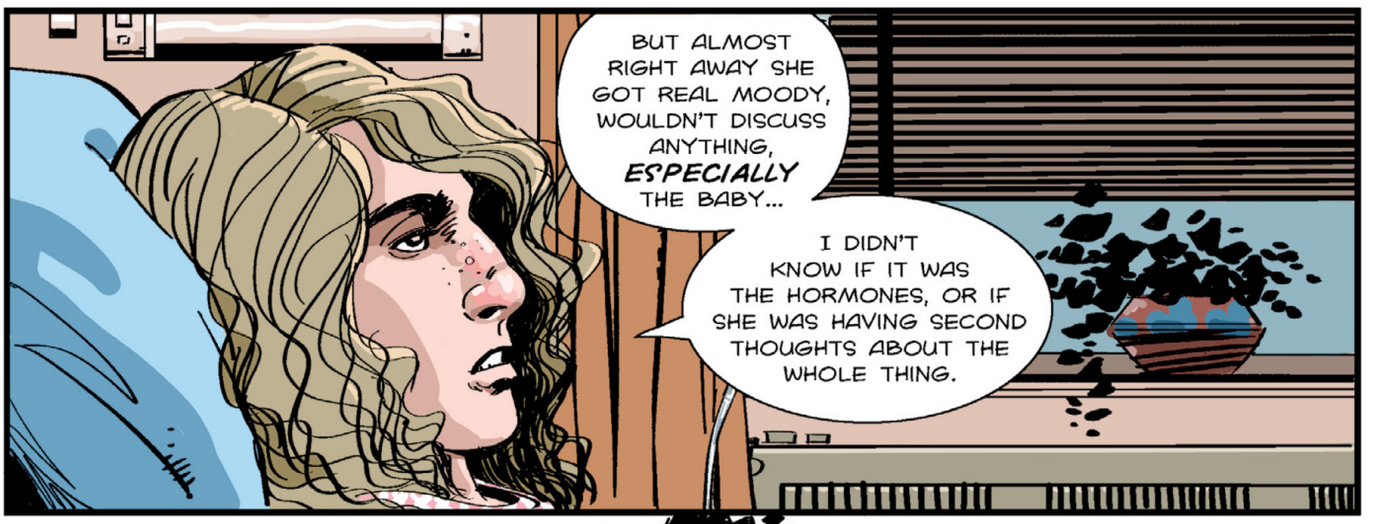

"SHE WAS IN A REALLY BAD WAY BY THEN.
"I KNEW SHE WAS HANGING OUT IN FANCY HOTELS... AND TURNING TRICKS...


"BUT AMAZINGLY, THAT NIGHT REALLY WAS THE START OF SOMETHING FOR US.
"SHE BEGAN TO COOL IT ON THE DRINKING, STOPPED GOING OUT AT NIGHT TO PICK UP GUYS...
"AND SHE BEGAN TO OPEN UP TO ME. FOR A FEW MONTHS WE WERE DELIRIOUSLY HAPPY."

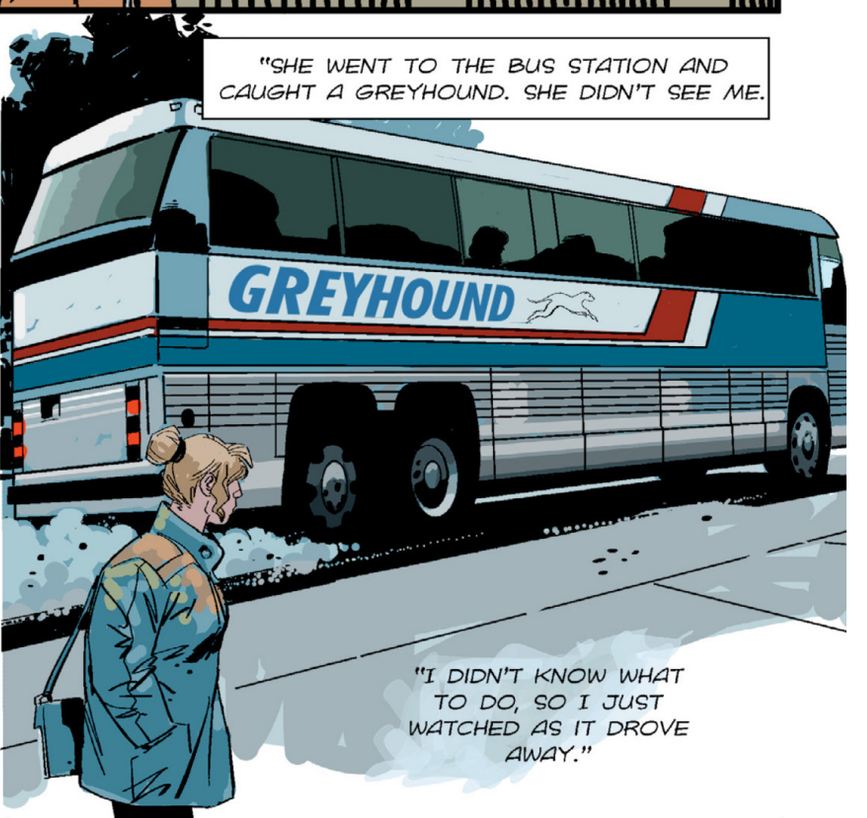
BUT...IF SHANNON HAD STOPPED HAVING... RELATIONS WITH MEN...
HOW DID SHE GET PREGNANT?


THAT WAS KIND OF MY IDEA... THOUGH I MEANT IT AS A JOKE...
WE WERE BOTH PRETTY MUCH FLUNKING OUR COURSES. SO I SAID MAYBE WE SHOULD BOTH JUST DROP OUT AND HAVE A BABY TOGETHER.

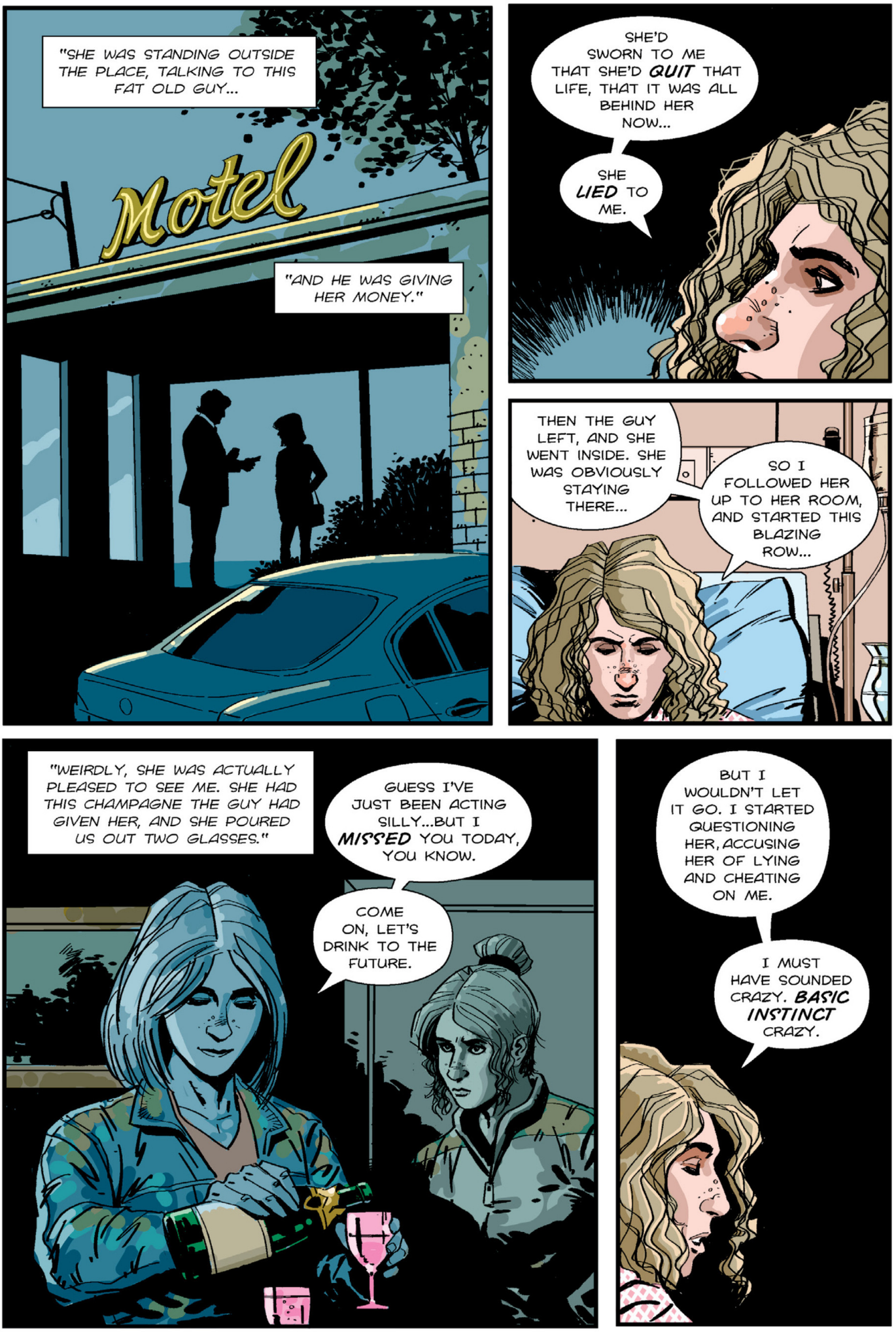
"BUT SHE THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT IDEA. SHE FIXED UP A GUY FOR STUD DUTY, AND MADE ME COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE.
"AND IT WORKED. SHE GOT PREGNANT FIRST TIME OUT."


BUT ALMOST RIGHT AWAY SHE GOT REAL MOODY, WOULDN'T DISCUSS ANYTHING, ESPECIALLY THE BABY...
I DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WAS THE HORMONES, OR IF SHE WAS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE WHOLE THING.

"ONE MORNING, SHE WAS JUMPY AND ACTING REAL WEIRD. SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING SHOPPING, BUT WHEN I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW I SAW SHE HAD A BACKPACK WITH HER.
Mel's DELI
"SO I FOLLOWED HER...

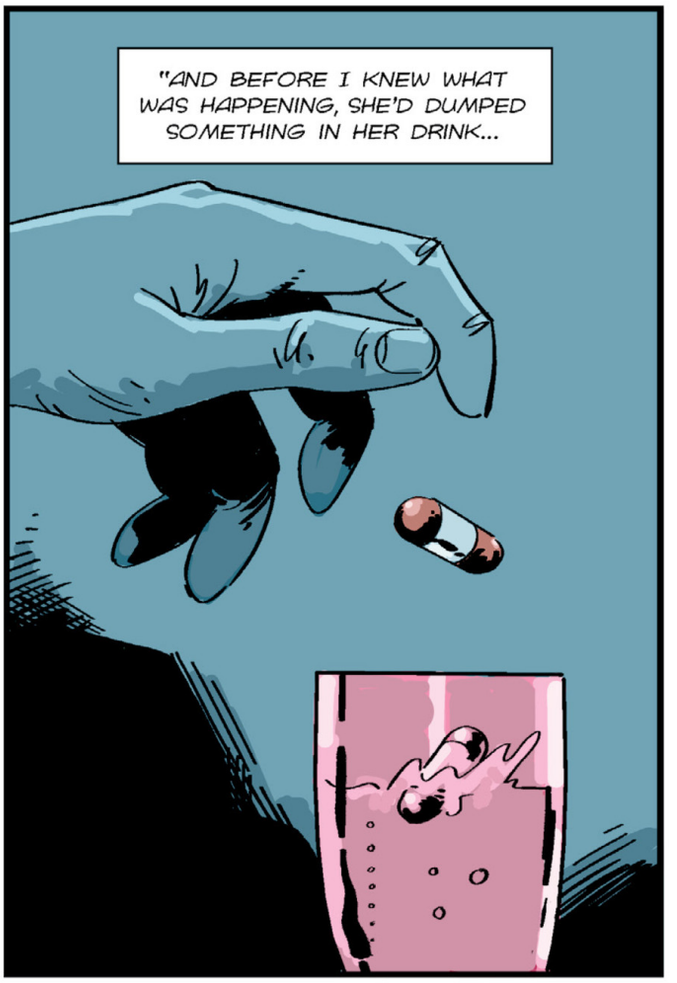

"SHE WENT TO THE BUS STATION AND CAUGHT A GREYHOUND. SHE DIDN'T SEE ME.
GREYHOUND
"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, SO I JUST WATCHED AS IT DROVE AWAY."

THE WOMAN AT THE TICKET OFFICE TOLD ME SHANNON HAD BOUGHT A TICKET FOR PATIENCE, SO...I GOT ON THE NEXT BUS THERE.
THEN I STARTED CHECKING ALL THE HOTELS IN TOWN. FOUND SHANNON ON THE SECOND TRY.

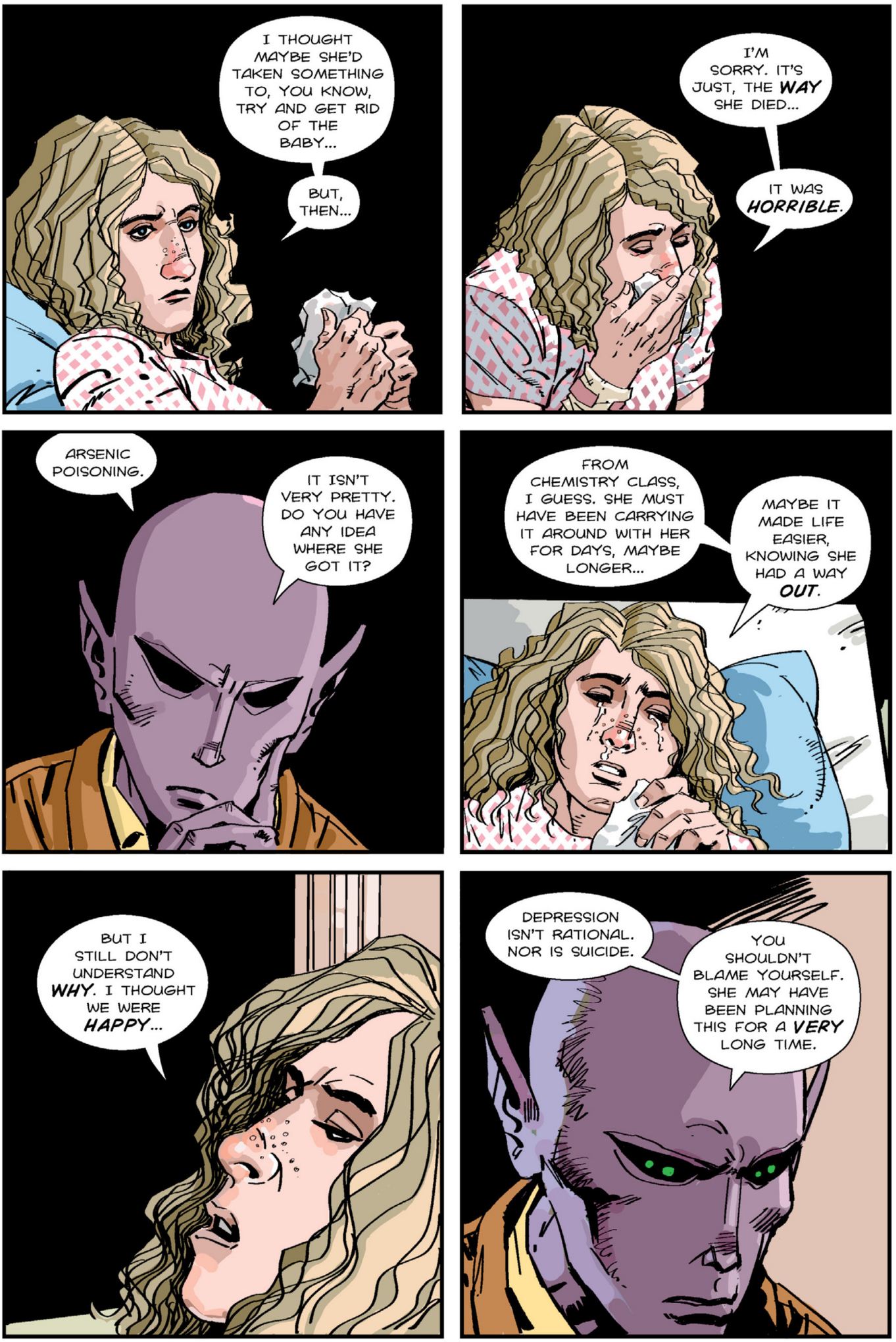

"SHE WAS STANDING OUTSIDE THE PLACE, TALKING TO THIS FAT OLD GUY...
Motel
"AND HE WAS GIVING HER MONEY."
SHE'D SWORN TO ME THAT SHE'D QUIT THAT LIFE, THAT IT WAS ALL BEHIND HER NOW...
SHE LIED TO ME.
THEN THE GUY LEFT, AND SHE WENT INSIDE. SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY STAYING THERE...
SO I FOLLOWED HER UP TO HER ROOM, AND STARTED THIS BLAZING ROW...
"WEIRDLY, SHE WAS ACTUALLY PLEASED TO SEE ME. SHE HAD THIS CHAMPAGNE THE GUY HAD GIVEN HER, AND SHE POURED US OUT TWO GLASSES."
GUESS I'VE JUST BEEN ACTING SILLY...BUT I MISSED YOU TODAY, YOU KNOW.
COME ON, LET'S DRINK TO THE FUTURE.
BUT I WOULDN'T LET IT GO. I STARTED QUESTIONING HER, ACCUSING HER OF LYING AND CHEATING ON ME.
I MUST HAVE SOUNDED CRAZY. BASIC INSTINCT CRAZY.

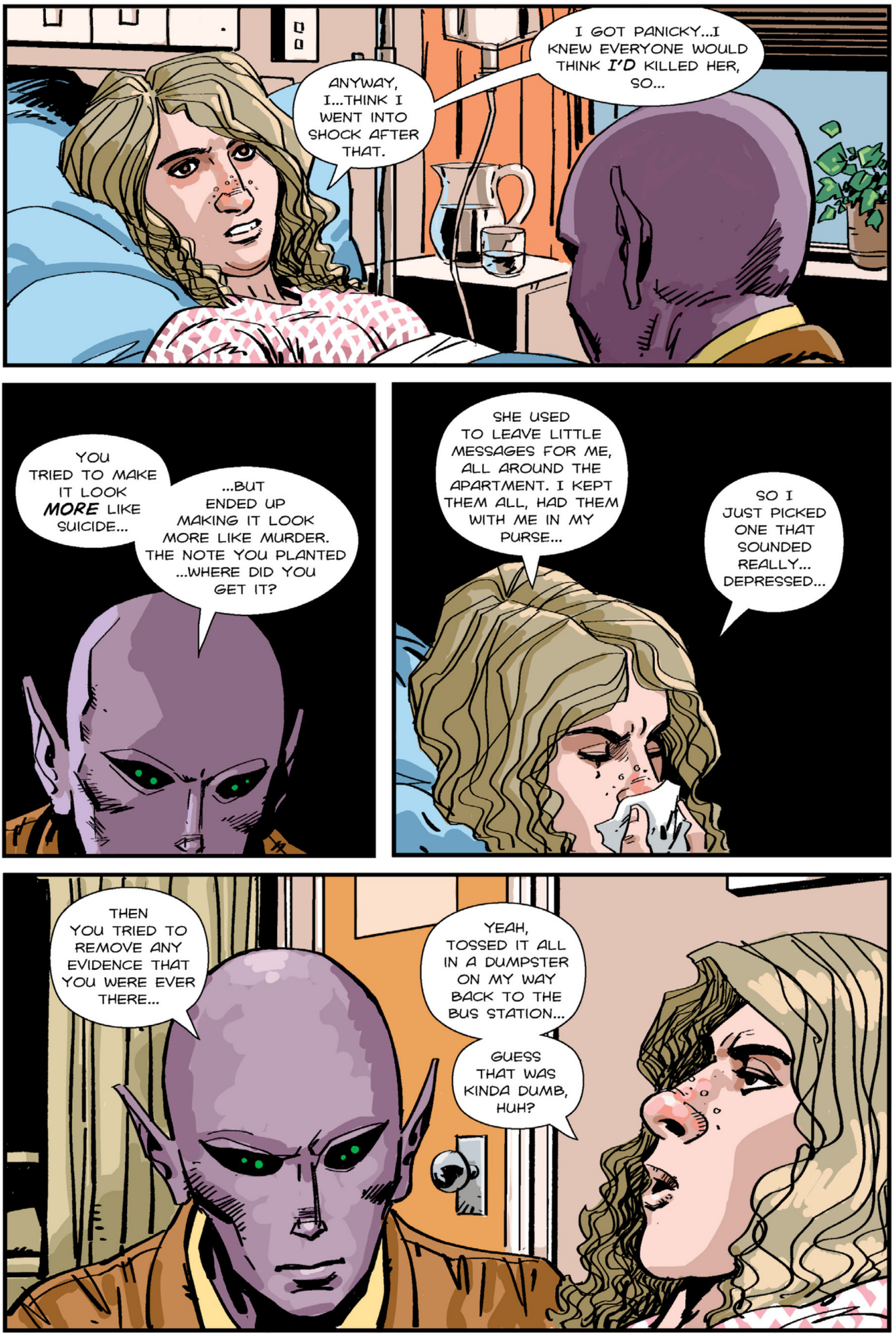
"AND THEN SHE SAID THIS CRUEL THING..."
THIS ISN'T LOVE.
YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER GUY.

"SHE STARTED ROOTING AROUND IN HER POCKETBOOK."
I DON'T NEED THIS %$@#...


"AND BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, SHE'D DUMPED SOMETHING IN HER DRINK...

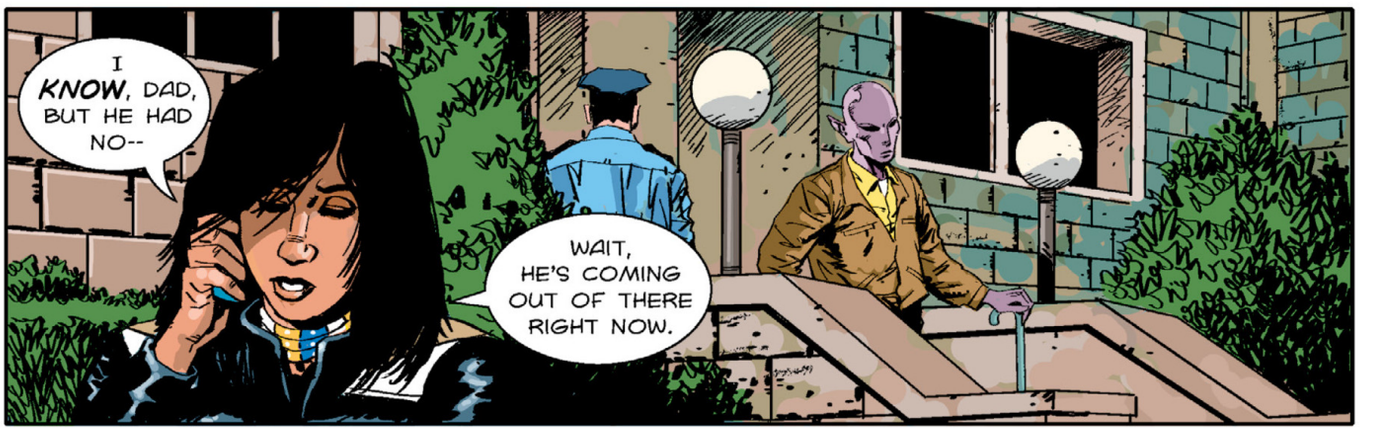
"THEN SHE DOWNED IT IN ONE."


I THOUGHT MAYBE SHE'D TAKEN SOMETHING TO, YOU KNOW, TRY AND GET RID OF THE BABY...
BUT, THEN...
I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST, THE WAY SHE DIED...
IT WAS HORRIBLE.
ARSENIC POISONING.
IT ISN'T VERY PRETTY. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE SHE GOT IT?
FROM CHEMISTRY CLASS, I GUESS. SHE MUST HAVE BEEN CARRYING IT AROUND WITH HER FOR DAYS, MAYBE LONGER...
MAYBE IT MADE LIFE EASIER, KNOWING SHE HAD A WAY OUT.
BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY. I THOUGHT WE WERE HAPPY...
DEPRESSION ISN'T RATIONAL. NOR IS SUICIDE.
YOU SHOULDN'T BLAME YOURSELF. SHE MAY HAVE BEEN PLANNING THIS FOR A VERY LONG TIME.


ANYWAY, I...THINK I WENT INTO SHOCK AFTER THAT.
I GOT PANICKY...I KNEW EVERYONE WOULD THINK I'D KILLED HER, SO...
YOU TRIED TO MAKE IT LOOK MORE LIKE SUICIDE...
...BUT ENDED UP MAKING IT LOOK MORE LIKE MURDER. THE NOTE YOU PLANTED ...WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
SHE USED TO LEAVE LITTLE MESSAGES FOR ME, ALL AROUND THE APARTMENT. I KEPT THEM ALL, HAD THEM WITH ME IN MY PURSE...
SO I JUST PICKED ONE THAT SOUNDED REALLY... DEPRESSED...
THEN YOU TRIED TO REMOVE ANY EVIDENCE THAT YOU WERE EVER THERE...
YEAH, TOSSED IT ALL IN A DUMPSTER ON MY WAY BACK TO THE BUS STATION...
GUESS THAT WAS KINDA DUMB, HUH?

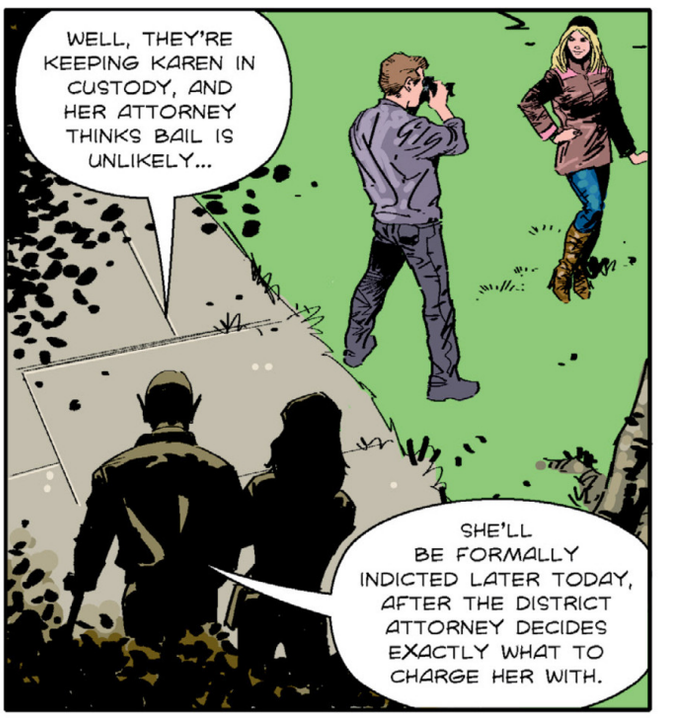
YES. THE POLICE FOUND IT.
AND THEY PROBABLY ALSO HAVE WITNESSES WHO CAN PLACE YOU IN PATIENCE THAT NIGHT.
I GUESS.
BUT I KIND OF DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO ME, Y'KNOW? NOTHING CAN BRING SHANNON BACK...
THOUGH I DO FEEL A LITTLE BETTER, NOW I'VE TOLD SOMEONE.
SO... WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
NOW YOU SHOWER AND GET DRESSED. AFTERWARD, YOU COME WITH ME...
...AND WE TELL YOUR STORY TO THE POLICE.

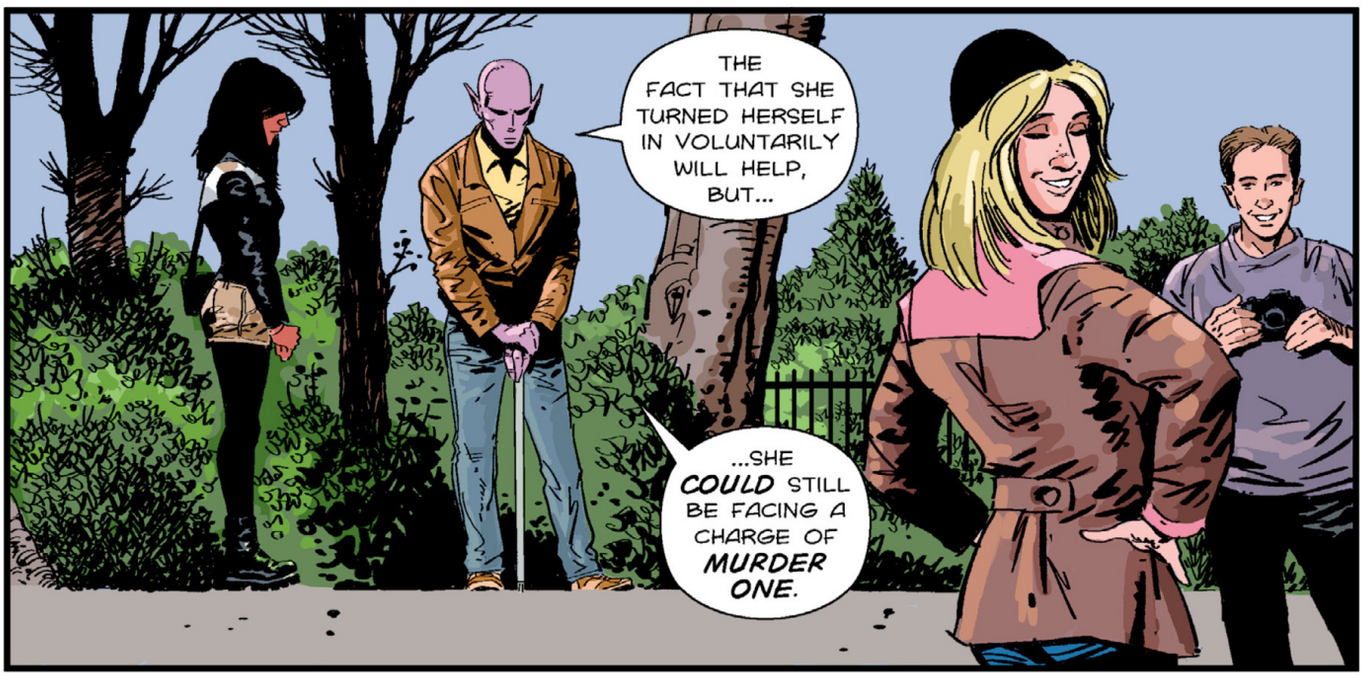
YEAH, WE SHOULD BE BACK IN PATIENCE TONIGHT.
WE'LL LEAVE JUST AS SOON AS HARRY GETS THROUGH WITH THE COPS.


I KNOW, DAD, BUT HE HAD NO--
WAIT, HE'S COMING OUT OF THERE RIGHT NOW.

YOU SEE? NOTHING BAD HAPPENED AFTER ALL.
YEAH, I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW, PROBABLY.

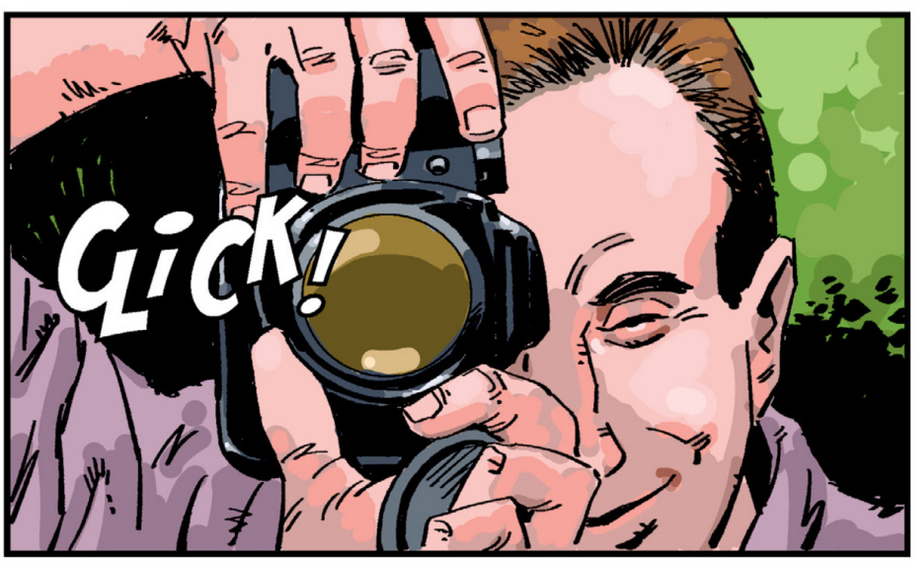
HEY...
HOW'D IT GO IN THERE?


WELL, THEY'RE KEEPING KAREN IN CUSTODY, AND HER ATTORNEY THINKS BAIL IS UNLIKELY...
SHE'LL BE FORMALLY INDICTED LATER TODAY, AFTER THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY DECIDES EXACTLY WHAT TO CHARGE HER WITH.


THE FACT THAT SHE TURNED HERSELF IN VOLUNTARILY WILL HELP, BUT...
...SHE COULD STILL BE FACING A CHARGE OF MURDER ONE.

YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD, HARRY.

I KNOW. LET'S JUST...
...GO HOME, SHALL WE?


CLICK!

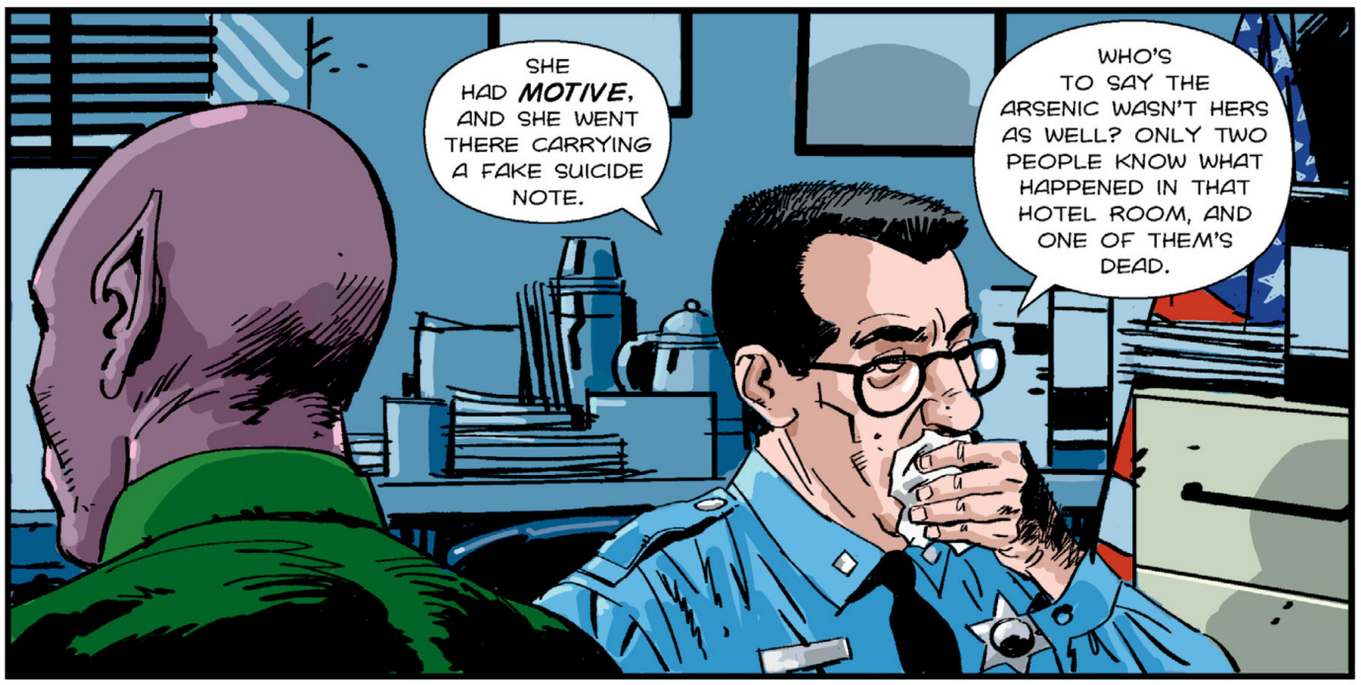
SO IT SEEMS IT WAS SUICIDE AFTER ALL.
TRAGIC, ISN'T IT?

WHY CAN'T PEOPLE JUST TALK TO EACH OTHER? AND TELL THE TRUTH WHEN THEY DO?
IF THEY DID, I'D BE OUT OF A JOB.

AND SPEAKING OF PEOPLE TRYING TO PUT ME OUT OF WORK... I DON'T WANT TO FIND YOU FOOLING AROUND IN POLICE BUSINESS LIKE YOU DID IN SEATTLE EVER AGAIN.
CLEAR?

YOU GOT LUCKY THIS TIME, HARRY...
...BUT IT COULD HAVE ENDED VERY BADLY.

MIKE, I HAD TO DO IT...FOR BERT'S SAKE.
BUT YES, OKAY, I PROMISE.
AT LEAST YOU DID CLEAR BERT.
STUPID ASS. HE SHOULD'VE TOLD US ABOUT THE CHAMPAGNE...AND THAT HE WAS PAYING THE GIRL FOR SEX.
TOO EMBARRASSED, I GUESS.
WELL, I SUPPOSE WE'LL BOTH GET CALLED AS WITNESSES. NOT THAT IT'LL DO HER MUCH GOOD.
YOU DON'T THINK A JURY WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO KAREN?
NOPE... CAN'T SAY I DO.


SHE HAD MOTIVE, AND SHE WENT THERE CARRYING A FAKE SUICIDE NOTE.
WHO'S TO SAY THE ARSENIC WASN'T HERS AS WELL? ONLY TWO PEOPLE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THAT HOTEL ROOM, AND ONE OF THEM'S DEAD.

THE FORENSICS WON'T PROVE ANYTHING, SO IT'S ALL DOWN TO WHETHER OR NOT THE JURY BELIEVES HER.
AND MY GUESS IS ALL THEY'LL SEE IS A CRAZY LESBIAN POISONER.

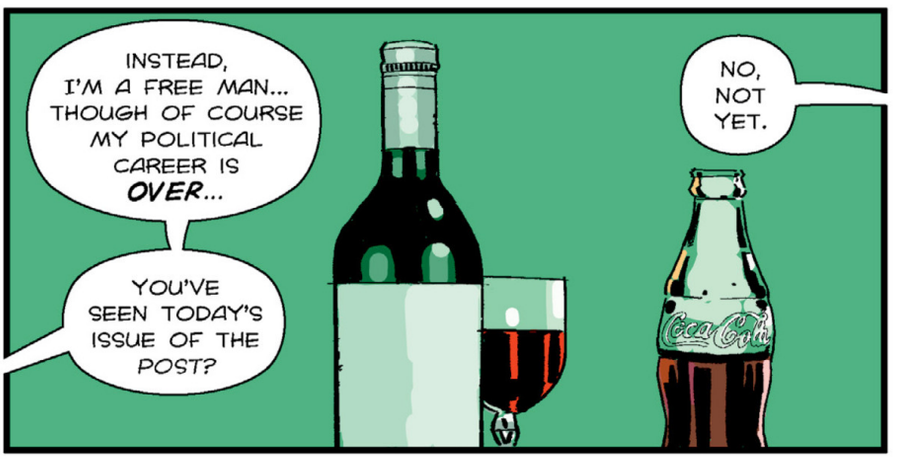
I BELIEVE HER, MIKE.
I THINK SHE'S INNOCENT.

MAYBE SO...BUT THERE'S NO PROOF. DON'T GO CONFUSING THE LAW WITH JUSTICE, MY FRIEND...
YOU SAVED ONE INNOCENT MAN, AND THAT'LL HAVE TO DO.

HARRY...
HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU ENOUGH?

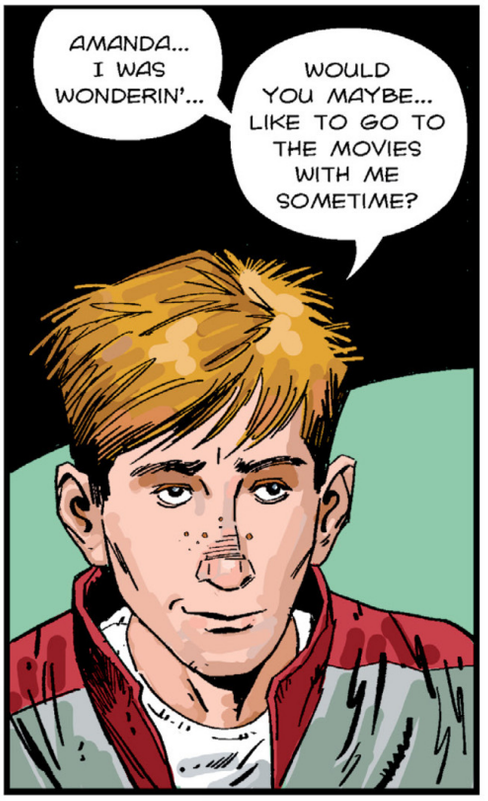
BERT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO--
YES.
I DO.

AT THE VERY LEAST YOU SAVED ME FROM AN UNPLEASANT ORDEAL IN FRONT OF A JURY...
MAYBE EVEN FROM A SEAT ON DEATH ROW...


INSTEAD, I'M A FREE MAN... THOUGH OF COURSE MY POLITICAL CAREER IS OVER...
YOU'VE SEEN TODAY'S ISSUE OF THE POST?
NO, NOT YET.

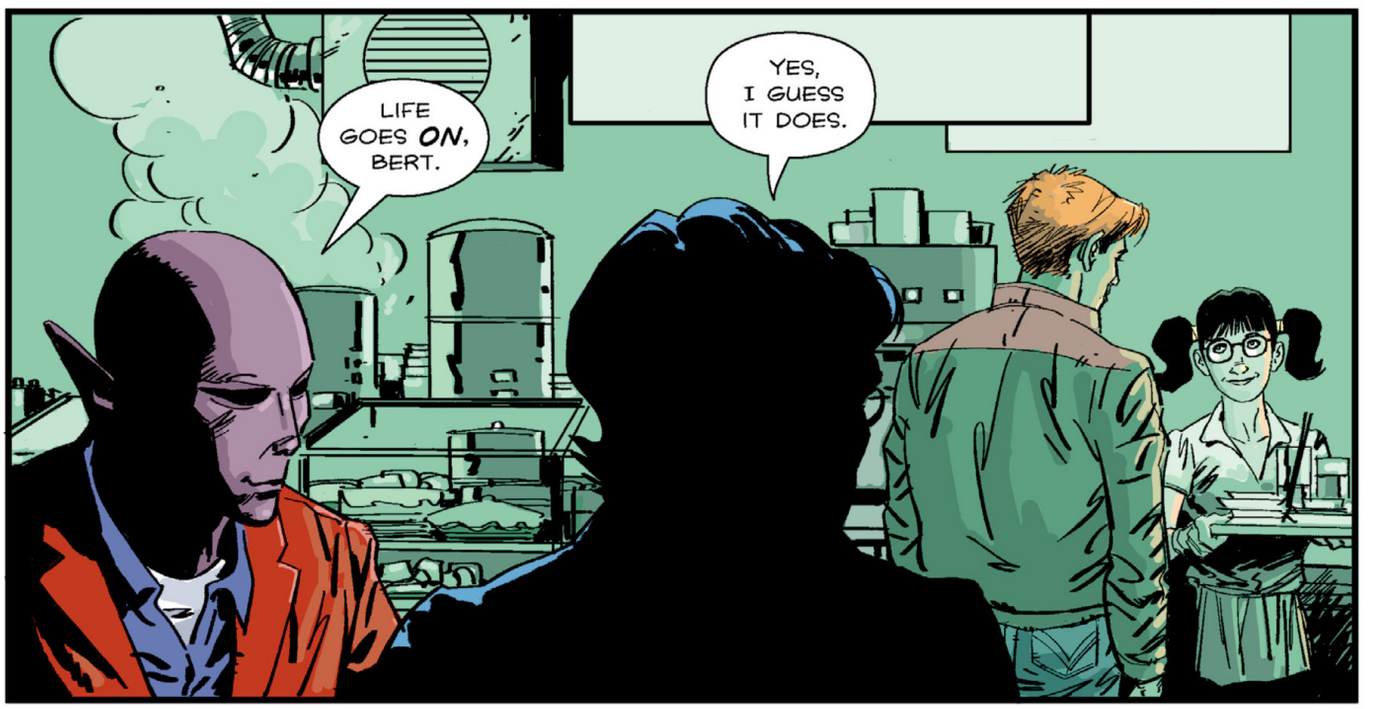
WELL, MY INVOLVEMENT WITH SHANNON IS FRONT-PAGE NEWS...
...UNDER THE HEADLINE "HIS DISHONOR." IT'S MY OWN STUPID FAULT, I KNOW...

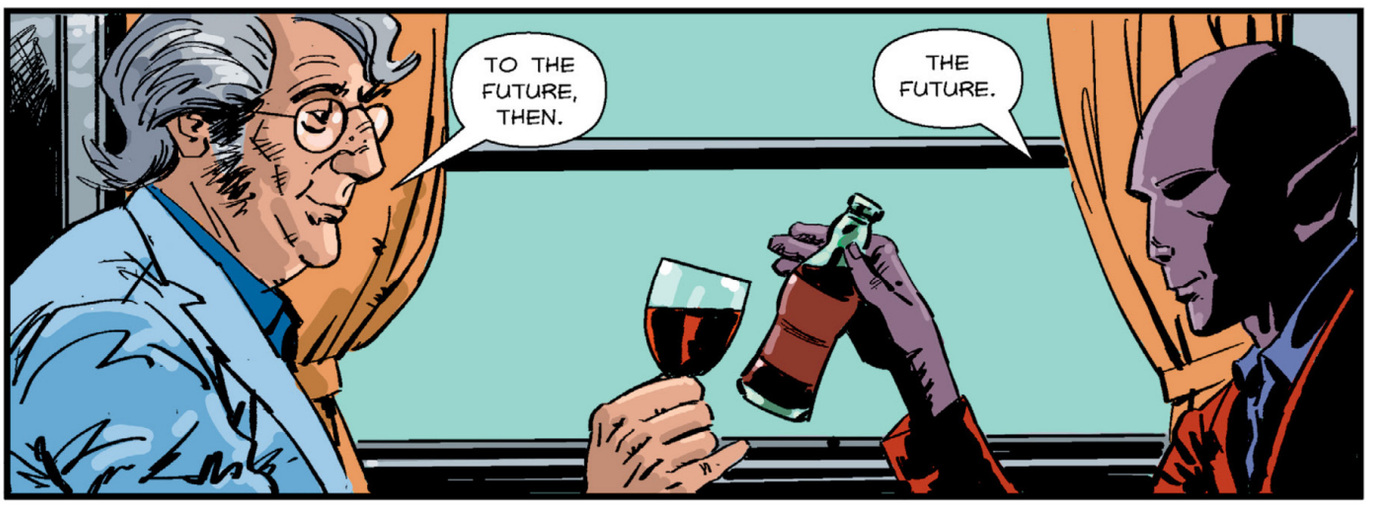
SO I INTEND TO RESIGN MY POSITION AS MAYOR.
WHATEVER THOSE... HACKS ON THE POST MAY THINK, I AM AN HONORABLE MAN.
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
OH, I STILL HAVE MY LAW PRACTICE.
DON'T WORRY, I'LL MANAGE TO KEEP BUSY.
I JUST WISH...
SHE HADN'T DONE IT.
AT LEAST YOU TRIED TO HELP HER, BERT...
BUT FROM EVERYTHING I'VE LEARNED ABOUT SHANNON, I'M NOT SURE SHE COULD HAVE BEEN HELPED. SOME PEOPLE CAN'T.
OH, LET'S HAVE ANOTHER DRINK...
...AND THINK OF SOMETHING CHEERFUL TO DRINK TO.


AMANDA... I WAS WONDERIN'...
WOULD YOU MAYBE... LIKE TO GO TO THE MOVIES WITH ME SOMETIME?

YOU KNOW, I THINK MAYBE I WOULD.
SATURDAY NIGHT GOOD FOR YOU?

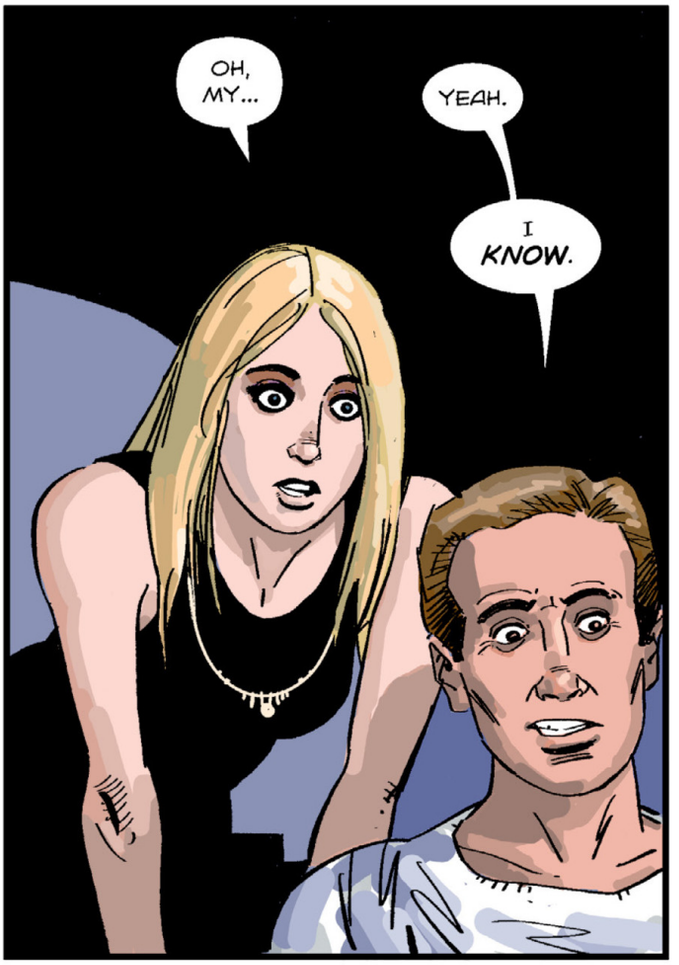
LOOK AT THOSE TWO.


LIFE GOES ON, BERT.
YES, I GUESS IT DOES.

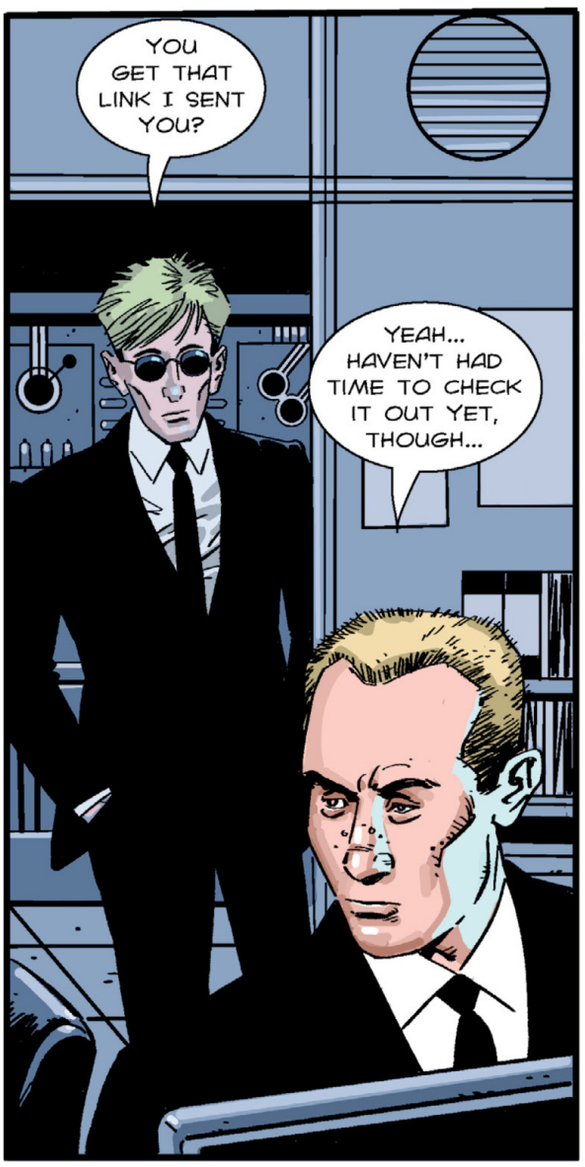

TO THE FUTURE, THEN.
THE FUTURE.

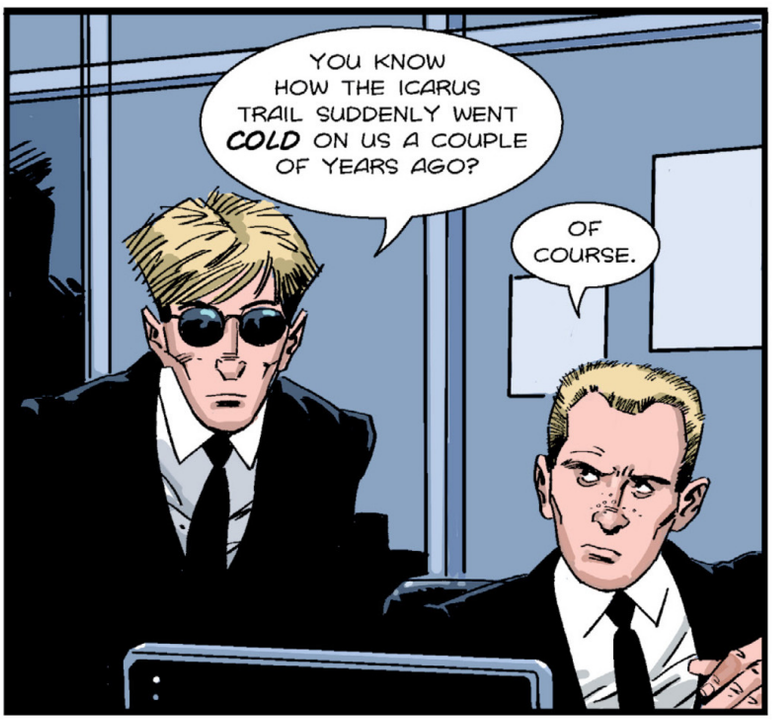
HEY, YOU--GET DRESSED.
WE'RE MEETING JOSH AND HANNAH FOR DINNER, REMEMBER?
IN A SEC... JUST LOADING THOSE PHOTOS.
HOLY--
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
LOOK HERE.
IN THE BACKGROUND.

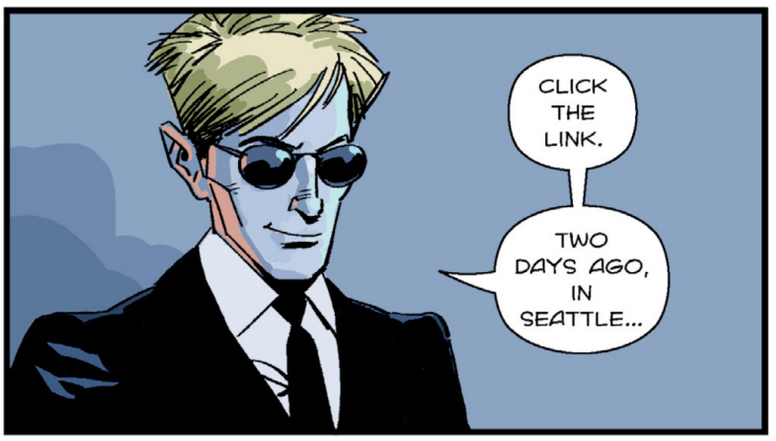
THAT CAN'T BE...
WAIT, I'LL ENLARGE IT.

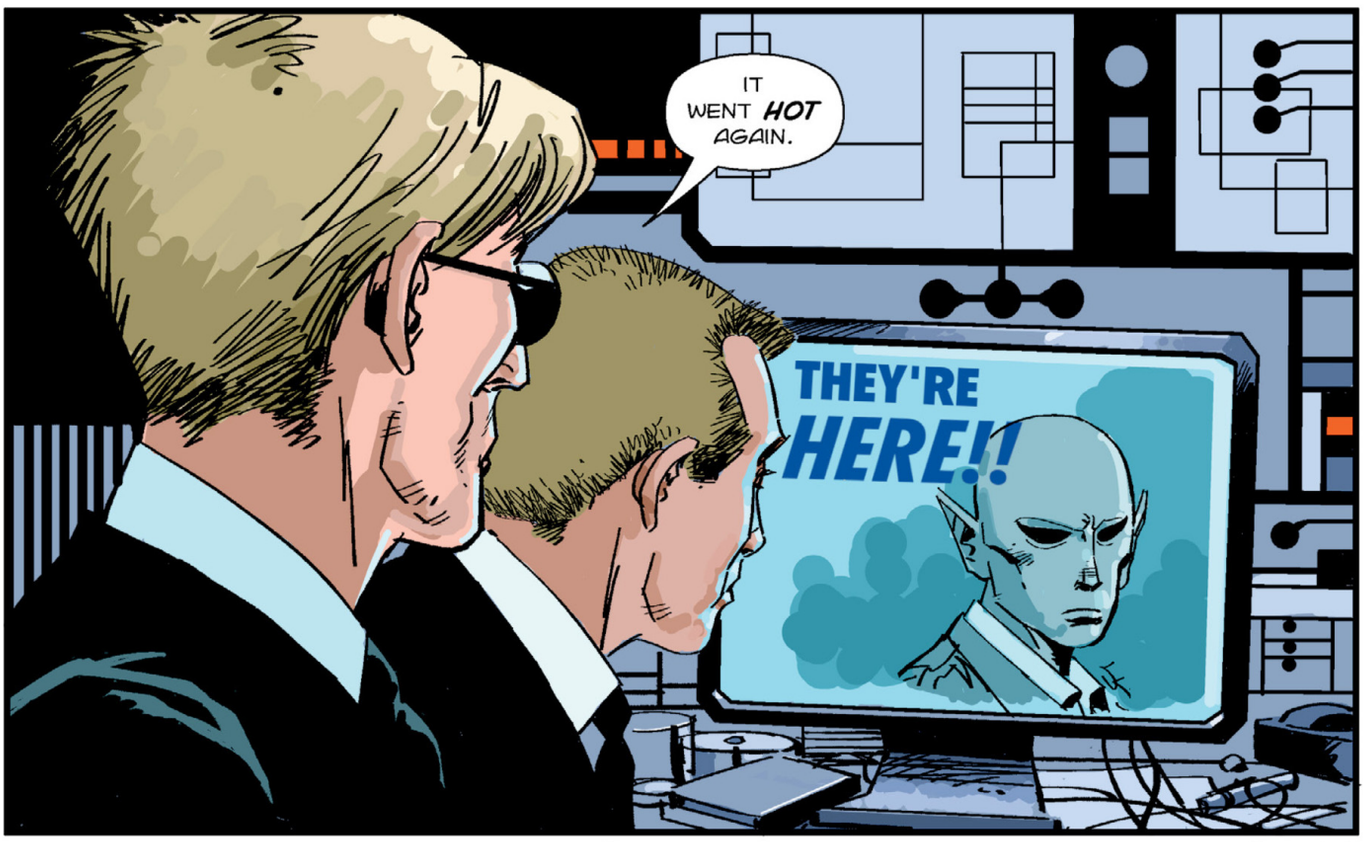

OH, MY...
YEAH.
I KNOW.

YOU'VE GOTTA POST THIS.
IT'S GONNA GO %¢$#ING VIRAL.

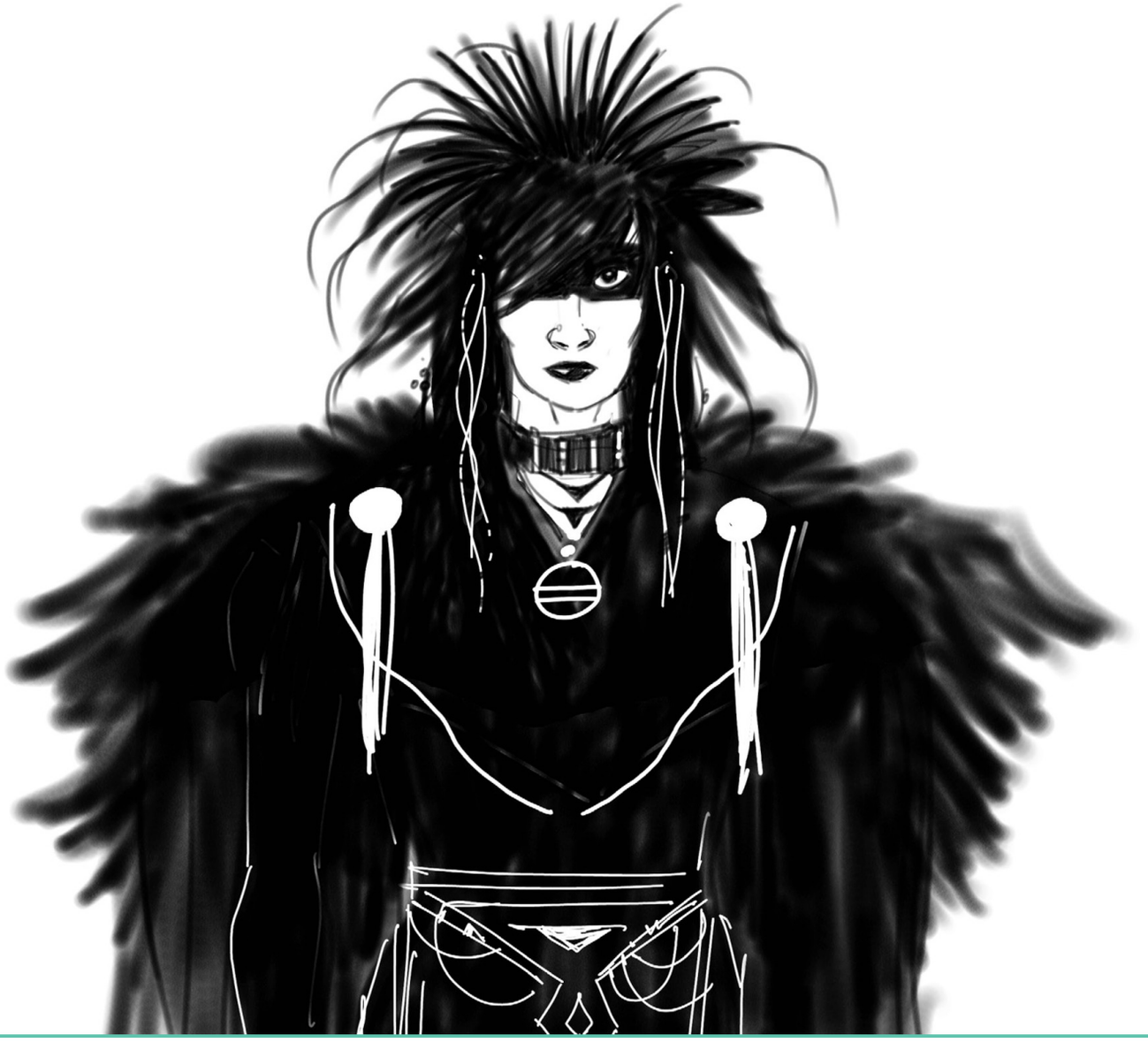








TO BE CONTINUED IN **RESIDENT ALIEN** VOLUME 3: **THE SAM HAIN MYSTERY!**



AFTERWORD

BY PETER HOGAN
WITH SPOT ART BY STEVE PARKHOUSE

I got stuck on the opening scene for this volume. I knew precisely what was going to happen in the main body of the story, but I had no idea how to begin it.

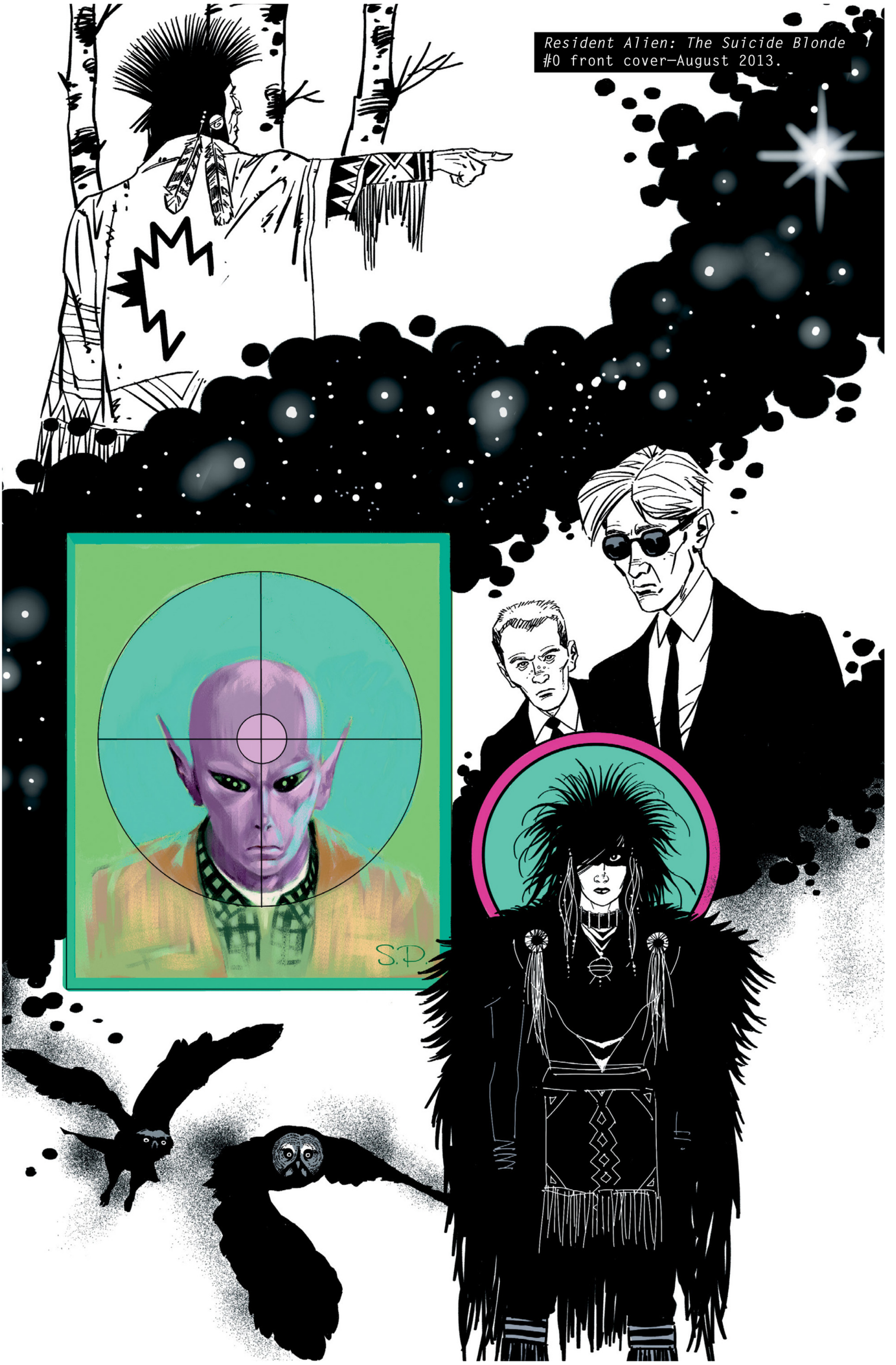
Actually, that's not quite true. I had an opening scene in mind, but... I was recovering from a really bad viral infection at the time, so perhaps my thinking was fuzzier than usual, because when it came time to sit down and write it, the scene I'd planned out simply didn't work.

So I tried another idea. And then another. And then I went back to the first one again. Nothing would ignite, and I felt like I was trapped in a revolving door, doomed to go round aimlessly, forever.

Then out of the blue, Steve Parkhouse helicoptered me out of this dilemma. He e-mailed over an image of Asta wearing a strange native costume, something he'd sketched out mainly for his own amusement and sent to me just because he thought I might like it...and seeing it obviously triggered something, because then I knew exactly where to begin.

Hope you enjoyed the results.

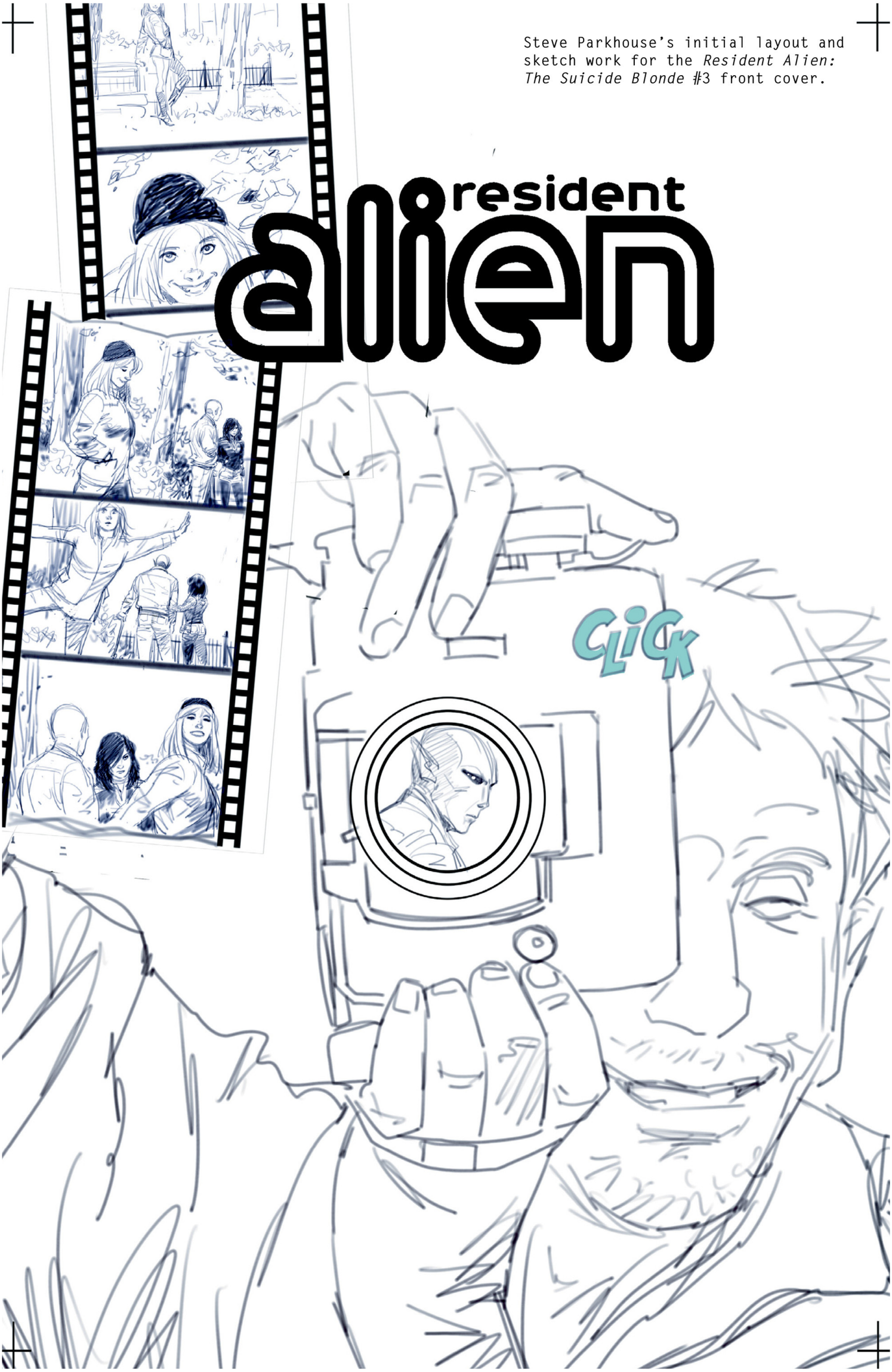
—PETER HOGAN
PLAYING SOLITAIRE
IN PATIENCE, 2014



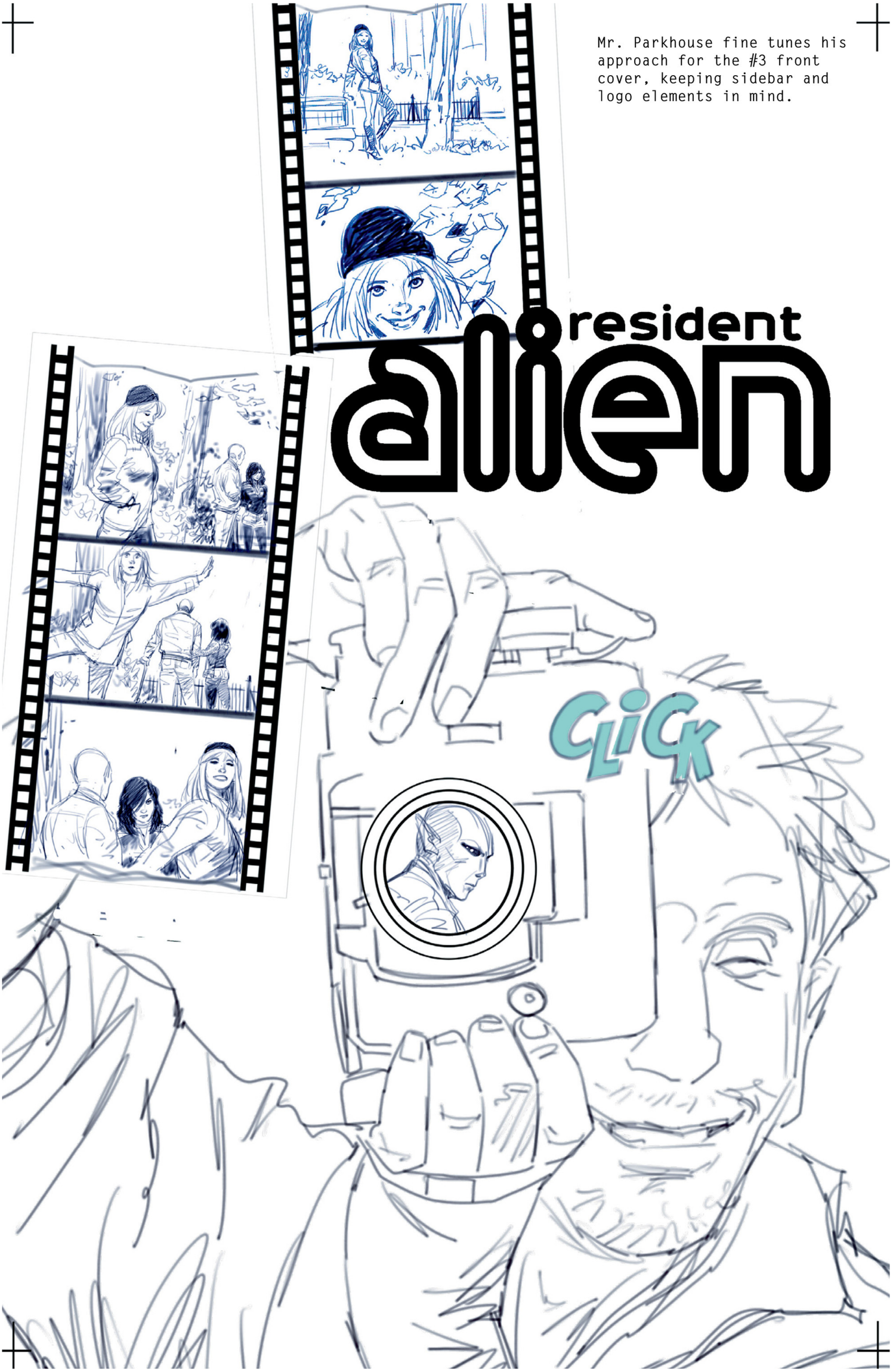
Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde #0 front cover—August 2013.

Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde #2 front cover—October 2013. The cover art for *Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde #1*, September 2013, is seen on page 2 in this volume.

Steve Parkhouse's initial layout and sketch work for the *Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde* #3 front cover.



Mr. Parkhouse fine tunes his approach for the #3 front cover, keeping sidebar and logo elements in mind.



Steve Parkhouse's cover inks for *Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde* #3.

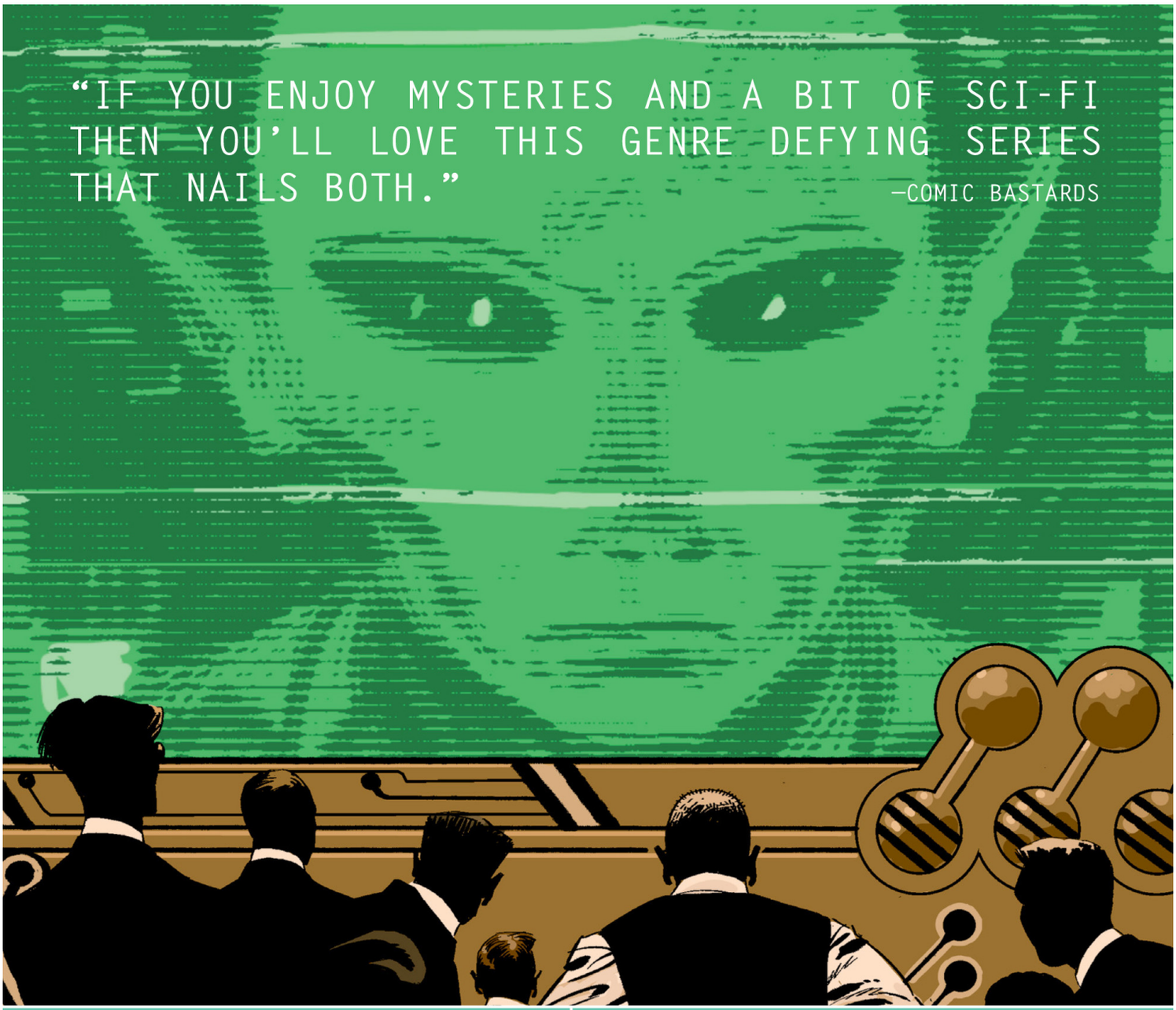
Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde #3 front cover—November 2013.

"A PITCH-PERFECT NARRATIVE FROM TWO OF MY FAVOURITE CREATORS."
—ALAN MOORE

AVAILABLE NOW FROM DARK HORSE BOOKS—THE FIRST VOLUME IN THIS ENTRANCING, ACCLAIMED SERIES BY PETER HOGAN AND STEVE PARKHOUSE!

How did a stranded alien known as Harry Vanderspeigle first become the town doctor for the supposedly sleepy town of Patience, USA? How did he get involved in his first murder mystery and begin working with sharp, headstrong nurse Asta? And how did those pesky federal agents first get a whiff of Harry's existence? Find out in *Resident Alien: Welcome to Earth!*—in stores now!

(ISBN 978-1-61655-017-2)



AN ALIEN EXPLORER STRANDED IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST YEARNS FOR HIS HOME WORLD, but he's enamored with ours—especially when it comes to solving murder mysteries! Undercover alien Dr. Harry Vanderspeigle seeks to clear the name of a friend who's blamed for a college girl's death, so he leaves the safety of small town Patience, USA, to hunt for clues in Seattle. He doesn't know that several federal agents are obsessed with Harry's crashed starship and the possibility of capturing the compassionate extraterrestrial!

Acclaimed creators Peter Hogan (*2000 AD*, *Tom Strong*) and Steve Parkhouse (*Milkman Murders*, *Doctor Who*) deliver a truly unique science-fiction/murder-mystery mash-up!

"THIS IS A CHARMING AND ATTRACTIVE COMIC, and I'd bet that if you try this comic, you'll fall in love with it."

—Comic Book Resources

"A SCI-FI MURDER MYSTERY, *Resident Alien: The Suicide Blonde* engages its readers with a supporting cast of quirky characters and a weird-looking protagonist."

—Bloody Disgusting

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